

**A Study into Teaching English
Grammar with Reference to Tripoli
University**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool
John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

PhD

MAY2016

Acknowledgments

All praise and thanks are due to Allah the most gracious and most merciful, who gave me health, strength, patience and knowledge to complete this PhD. The accomplishment of this study is credited to many people's contributions and support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all most sincerely. My utmost gratitude and appreciation go to my Director of Studies Dr. Karim Menacere, who has provided me with continuous support and guidance throughout these years of academic work. Many thanks for his patience, constructive comments, guidance and invaluable suggestions, and insightful feedback throughout all the stages of my PhD journey. Indeed, I am greatly indebted to him for always making the time to listen, discuss and read drafts and for his valuable comments, which I will always treasure. I would also like to thank my new Director of studies Chris Mulhearn for his support and second and third supervisors Amanda Mason and Jarmila Hickman for their invaluable advice and comments. I would also like to express my appreciation to all my PhD colleagues at Liverpool Business School at LJMU, and to Dr Yusra Mouzughhi for her moral support, her encouraging words and valuable advice. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the people who participated in this study.

My sincere gratitude and honour go to my dear father and my mother who have provided me with invaluable love and support in every way possible. Finally, and most importantly, to my beloved family, my dear husband Al-Hadi for his patience, and support, he has provided me with love and encouragement, when I needed it the most. Gratitude goes to my four precious boys Mohamed, Mouad, Suhaib and Ahmed Gadaur for their love and patience throughout my PhD journey.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father and mother who without their encouragement and support I would not be where I am today. This thesis is also dedicated to my husband and children who were very patient and considerate when I felt down and under pressure. They were the light, which guided my way throughout this long rewarding journey. They strengthened my resolve to reach my goal. To them I dedicate this work.

Abstract

This study examined teachers and learners' beliefs about teaching English grammar at Tripoli University. It explored the role of grammar in this context and the optimal method or approach of teaching grammar in such a context. The present investigation aimed at identifying the causes behind the learners' difficulties in using their knowledge of grammar to communicate effectively and the challenges, which confront the lecturers when dealing with grammar instruction.

Grammar teaching has been and continues to be a source of controversy, and heated debate, which has led many second language researchers to rethink the status of grammar in language learning and teaching. Grammar has often generated conflicting views. Thornbury (2009) argues that no other issue has preoccupied theorists and practitioners as much as the grammar debate which has brought about a split of views, specifically into those who claim that grammar should not be taught at all, and others who believe that grammar should be given a central role in English language teaching .

In order to achieve reliable and valid results, this research employed a mixed methods approach, since relying on one single research approach and strategy could reduce the effectiveness of this study. The underpinning philosophy identifying this study is positivism because of the large amount of quantitative data. The justification for combining a quantitative and qualitative research approach is related to the purpose of the study, the nature of the problem and research questions. Accordingly, quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire involving students at the English language department at Tripoli University. This was supported by qualitative data collected by using semi- structured interviews for lecturers teaching grammar at the English department.

The findings of this study showed that students and lecturers at Tripoli University valued the role of grammar instruction and that it should be recognised in all the different skills. The findings also revealed that the participants were unhappy with the way grammar is taught in lectures. They also suggested that further research be conducted in all the different teaching skills. This study is pertinent because it has academic value. It has added to the literature on the importance of English grammar and contribute to the ongoing debate of whether grammar should be taught or acquired. In addition, it will benefit the students and lecturers in developing communicative competence by enhancing grammar teaching. It will raise awareness about the challenges of teaching English grammar in Libya and benefit future researchers interested in the teaching of grammar.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UK - UNITED KINGDOM

USA - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EFL - ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ESL - ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

GBT - GRAMMAR BASED TEACHING

CLT - COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

TBLT - TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

GTM - GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

SLA - SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

L1 - FIRST LANGUAGE

L2 - SECOND LANGUAGE

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess teachers' and students' views regarding the role of grammar in teaching and learning English as a second language focusing on Tripoli University as a research context. It will also aim to develop teachers' ability to enhance change in the development of students' grammar knowledge across the four skills. This research investigates how grammar is taught and identifies the challenges hindering university students in learning and using English grammar in communication. It will also raise teachers' awareness of the place of grammar in the English Language curriculum and its relevance to other skills such as speaking and writing. It will also gauge the lecturers' perceptions about whether grammar should be taught separately from the four skills or whether it should be integrated. This study will also contribute to the debate over whether grammar should be taught or acquired.

1.2 Background of the study

The teaching of grammar has been strongly disputed over the last 30 years (Ellis 2002). The reason for this dispute lies in the fact that the traditional methods of language teaching, based on formal grammar instruction, have often been unsuccessful in providing L2 learners with the skills they need to communicate efficiently. In teaching methods, which relied on memorising rules, grammar held a key role. This position was then challenged by Krashen and Terrell (1983) and with the advent of the communicative approach and

natural methods, the argument put forward by many authors, was that teaching grammar does not necessarily correlate with acquiring language. Krashen and Terrell (1983), stress that language should be acquired through natural exposure; it should not be learned through formal instruction. This led to the belief that formal grammar instruction would increase declarative knowledge (the knowledge of grammatical rules) rather than the ability to use forms correctly.

Thornbury (2009) argues that no other issue has preoccupied theorists and practitioners as much as the grammar debate which has brought about a split of views, specifically those who claim that grammar should not be taught at all, and others who argue that grammar should be given a central role in English language teaching (Mukminatien 2008). Similarly, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) assert that the role of grammar instruction in second language learning was downplayed with the rise of the communicative approach in the late 1970's. However, recent research has stressed the need for formal instruction so that learners can gain high levels of accuracy. Cook (2001) also stresses the importance of grammar instruction. He considers grammar as the central area of language around which other areas such as pronunciation and vocabulary revolve. According to Cook (2001), however important the other components of the language may be, they are all connected to each other through grammar.

Petraki and Hill (2010) indicate that the key debate is centred on the question of how grammar should be taught: overtly or whether it should be integrated into the communicative approach or dropped completely. For decades

grammar was eclipsed and kept in the dark by the communicative approach (Richards and Rogers, 2012), when it was viewed as “*surplus to requirement*” and a constraint in communicative context. The teaching of grammar is often deeply rooted in the traditional approach of presenting and explaining rules followed by mechanical drills of grammar exercises (Ur 1996, Hedge 2000). However, the view that grammar teaching is considered as a silo approach, which operates in isolation from the other four skills, has been openly criticised by Ellis (2006:84) as an “*overtly narrow definition of grammar teaching*”. Ellis (2006:84) goes on to suggest that:

“Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws the learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalise it”

There has recently been a revival of grammar and grammar is starting to be acknowledged as “*an essential inescapable component of language learning*” (Burgess and Etherington 2002:433). Richards and Rogers (2001), state that grammar has reclaimed its rightful position in language teaching. Currently only a minority of language teaching professionals support the zero option of no form focused instruction, which excludes grammar from teaching, recommended by Krashen and Terrell (1983) and Mukminatien (2008). Based on the insufficient evidence and lack of practical implications proposed by the advocates and opponents arguing for or against the teaching of grammar, this study acknowledges that the teaching and learning of grammar has provided many useful and beneficial insights for foreign language teaching.

The key debate is centred on the question of whether grammar should be taught overtly, integrated into the communicative approach, or dropped completely. This debate resulted in the emergence of different views, approaches and methods in grammar teaching (Zain and Rohani 2007). The present study will critically review these different views and approaches.

This study will look into the beliefs of students and teachers concerning the place of grammar and the role it plays in second language learning and teaching. Not much attention has been given to students' attitudes and beliefs, although they have a strong influence on the teaching process especially in Libya where learning is teacher centred rather than learner centred. Loewen et al. (2009) argue that there has been less research specifically into L2 learners' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction in the L2 classroom compared to the attention given to L2 learners' general language learning beliefs. The importance of learners' beliefs in teaching is emphasised by Kern (1995) argues that language learners are not always conscious of their own learning style but they hold, especially older learners, strong beliefs about how they should learn a language. These beliefs are usually based on the way they have been taught a language and the assumption that a particular type of instruction works best for them. Moreover, a few studies have indicated that students' perceptions were very important in order to have successful language learning. Finally, this study will make recommendations based on the findings on how to improve grammar instruction for students at Tripoli University.

1.3 Statement of the problem

For many years, English grammar in Libya has been greatly influenced by traditional methods of teaching, not just in second /foreign language but also in core Arabic subjects. These methods focus on learning the knowledge of the grammatical rules of language, ignoring its communicative functions. The overstressed traditional grammar method that most lecturers have been following for years has been detrimental to other language skills that effect the development of students' foreign language skills such as reading writing and speaking. The traditional approaches to teaching grammar were not noticed to be beneficial. They helped in learning a list of grammatical forms, but when it came to using these forms in producing the language, knowledge of grammar alone did not help in achieving fluency (Jha 2014). The problem here is how to integrate knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in the development of communicative competence. Hence, it was clear that there should be a link between form and meaning in teaching grammar. Furthermore, knowledge of grammar without practicing the use of language is unhelpful in terms of communication.

Communicating in the English language suffers a considerable breakdown in the absence of the correct use of grammar. Most Libyan university students have been learning grammar for almost five years, but many of them are unable to put this grammatical knowledge into practice through both speaking and writing. They may know about the grammatical rules, but they are not capable of using these rules in communicating effectively. This is because in Libya, English grammar is taught through traditional methods of translating

rules into Arabic, despite the fact that the two systems, Arabic and English, operate differently and new approaches have been introduced in the field of teaching. Students are expected to do many repeated exercises and drills, which become dull and ineffective (Jha 2014). In addition, the difference between the Arabic and English grammar systems affects the L2 learner's grammatical performance. This is because the grammatical knowledge of the L2 is influenced by the learners' L1 grammatical knowledge.

Very often, when learners are given grammatical rules, they work well on applying these rules to the given exercises. However, when they write or speak, the learners make grammatical mistakes or even unnecessary ones. Helping learners apply grammatical rules in communicative tasks (for example, writing and speaking) is very challenging. Therefore, teachers should use alternative teaching approaches which best suit the Libyan context for teaching grammar so that they can integrate grammar into other language skills in such a way that the goal of learning the English language is ultimately achieved.

Another problem, which arises, is the diversity of the teaching staff, which includes several nationalities that have different linguistic and educational backgrounds (e.g. from Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, etc...) and which makes it difficult for the students to adapt to lecturers' various teaching methods and approaches. Moreover, there is an abject shortage of up to date resources to enhance and facilitate the teaching and learning process. This rudimentary environment often leads to unmotivated teachers who improvise their lessons

with no clear planned curriculum. Another critical problem, which could be a contributing factor to the decline in the quality of teaching grammar in Libyan universities, is the absence of the technology, which helps improve and assist the teaching and learning process.

However, the Higher Education sector in Libya following the latest regime change will address these gaps, where emphasis will be put on the importance of grammar instruction, which has suffered greatly from the lack of a clear and updated curriculum, in addition to the use of traditional methods and approaches, which are teacher centred rather than being student centred. It also suffers from the tendency to use rote learning rather than by reasoning, which is a characteristic of Arab education in general, like with 'kuttab' or Qur'anic school.

Students also face several problems at the university, which constrain their learning of the English language, including thinking in Arabic, the lack of opportunity to speak English because there is no exposure to actual English language in their daily lives, which undermines and restricts their learning opportunities. As the former Libyan regime has been isolated for over a decade through UN sanctions and western countries' embargo on Libya, learning English starts and stops in the classroom.

1.4 Aim of the study

This study aims to evaluate the teaching and learning of English grammar at Tripoli University by assessing the teachers and students' views about

grammar and making recommendations on how to improve the teaching of grammar.

1.5 Research questions

In order to achieve the research aim, this study has set the following questions:

1. What are the theories, concepts and models of grammar teaching?
2. What are the difficulties facing Libyan students when learning English grammar?
3. What are the students' views regarding the role of grammar in learning English?
4. What are the views and perceptions of the lecturers and learners regarding the learning and teaching of grammar?
5. What grammar methods are best suited to facilitate foreign language learning in the case of Libyan university students?
6. What recommendations can be made to enhance the teaching and learning of grammar at Tripoli University?

1.6 Research objectives

In order to answer the above questions this study has outlined the following objectives:

1. To critically review the literature related to the teaching of grammar.
2. To assess the difficulties and challenges hindering Libyan students when learning English grammar.

3. To explore lecturers' and learners' beliefs, regarding the learning and teaching of grammar.
4. To assess the students' and lecturers' views about the role of grammar in foreign language learning and teaching
5. To describe what methods are best suited to facilitate the learning and teaching of grammar.
6. To make recommendations based on the findings of this study to enhance the teaching of English grammar in Libya.

1.7 Rationale of the study

1. This study is pertinent because it has academic value. It will expand the literature on the importance of English grammar and contribute to the debate on whether grammar should be taught or not.
2. It will benefit the stakeholders (students, lecturers and educationalists) by the promotion of integrating grammar to enhance the learners' communicative skills
3. It will raise awareness about the weaknesses of the current teaching and learning of English grammar at Tripoli University.

The rationale behind setting the research questions and objectives is three fold. First, it is due to the researcher's personal interest. The researcher works as a lecturer at Tripoli University, is engaged in the teaching of grammar and other English language modules, and has witnessed the inadequacies of the outcomes of teaching. Second, it is due to the researcher's academic interest.

Grammar is a topic, which has long been a controversial issue, which has attracted a lot of interest. The researcher as a teacher and lecturer has witnessed the effects of poor grammar in the speaking and writing of students at Tripoli University. From this perspective, the researcher set out to investigate the perceptions of the learners and lecturers. Third, it is due to practical interest. The study findings provide fresh insights and useful information on the teaching of Grammar at Tripoli University. The study raises awareness regarding the difficulties that learners have with grammar. The study also makes recommendations on how best to teach English grammar in Libya. To provide decision-makers (curriculum designers and Educators) with evidence on what best methods and techniques best suits the Libyan context.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters, which are outlined as follows:

Chapter One: Is the Introduction to the research. It Provides the background of the study. It sets the research problem and highlights the significance of the study, rationale, aim and objectives of this research.

Chapter Two: deals with the context of the study. The Libyan educational system is also briefly presented followed by background information concerning EFL education in Libya including its status and the challenges it faces.

Chapter Three: reviews the relevant literature. It first sheds light on the diverse definitions of grammar. It then identifies the three different trends towards grammar instruction: proponents of grammar, those who rejected grammar

and those who call for the revival of grammar. A section in the chapter is devoted to discussing teachers and learners' beliefs.

Chapter Four: discusses the methodology and methods of the study and the underpinning philosophy behind the choice of methodology. It also provides an explanation of the procedures involved in designing the data collection instruments and the justifications for the choices of tools, which were used to collect the data concerning the teaching of grammar at Tripoli University.

Chapter Five: is the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data using SPSS for the quantitative data and content analysis for the qualitative data. It also provides a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter Six: provides the discussion of the results and conclusion, which is drawn from the findings, it also provides the limitations of the study, contribution to knowledge, recommendations and suggestions for further research in this area in order to enhance and improve the teaching of grammar.

Chapter Two

Libyan Context

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research context. It highlights key background information that is directly linked to the study. The purpose of this overview is to gain a broader understanding of the status of English in general and grammar in particular positioning it within Arabic speakers in Libya.

Libya is located in the centre of North Africa facing the Mediterranean to the North with a coast line of about 1.900 kilometres. It shares borders with Egypt and Sudan to the east, Niger and Chad to the south and Algeria and Tunisia to the west. The population of Libya is approximately 6.5 million, where the majority live mainly in the north of the country. Libya is a small country in terms of population compared with most of the other countries in Africa or the Middle East. The official language is Arabic and Islam is the religion of the state. In the 1950s, Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world with a small illiterate population and almost no schools. Since 1963, oil revenues have allowed the rapid growth of education. By 1969, education was compulsory and free to all Libyans. Consequently, the number of literate people increased from 20% in 1951 to 82% in 2003. This chapter introduces the context of Libya where this study has been conducted.

2.3 Educational system in Libya - a historical overview

This section commences with a background on Libya and the changing attitude to English language teaching. Libya was an Italian colony from 1912 to 1943. Formal schools were opened for the education of the offspring of the Italian settlers, soldiers and bureaucrats. The medium of instruction was Italian while Libyan nationals were denied entry to these schools. Libyans continued to send their children to religious schools where they were taught the Holy Quran and the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. This scenario continued for about two decades after which children of influential Libyan families were permitted to study in the Italian schools. Even then, these Libyan students could attend the Italian schools only until they completed the fourth grade. When King Idris, the first and last king of independent Libya came to power, tremendous transformation began to take place in the education sector. Under the monarchy, all Libyans were guaranteed the right to education. Libya witnessed a surge in the establishment of schools. Religious schools that had been closed during the struggle for independence were reactivated and new schools were established, which gave a religious mode to Libyan education.

2.4 The structure of the Libyan educational system

The structure of the Libyan education system is classified into four levels. The system works from primary and elementary education through to secondary education and finally to higher and university education (Ministry of Education, 2008). Specifically, there is 6 years primary, 3 years elementary, 3 years secondary and 4 to 5 years at university level, depending on fields and specialization. However, it can be noted that, there are many problems facing

Libyan students in learning English language. In addition to that, the teacher is the only source of knowledge and the learner has no opportunity to participate except if she/he is asked to answer a question. The following table 2.1 illustrates the different stages of education in Libya

Table 1 : Stages of the Educational System in Libya

| Level | Years | Ages | Period |
|--------------|-------|-------|--|
| Primary | 1-6 | 6-12 | 6 years |
| Middle | 7-9 | 12-15 | 3 years |
| High schools | 10-12 | 15-18 | 3 years (used to be 4) |
| University | 13-17 | 18-22 | 4 years and some faculties spend 5 years |

Source: (Elabbar 2011)

2.5 The Libyan higher education system

The Libyan Higher Education system plays a significant role in Libya's economic, cultural and social development. It seeks to create highly qualified professionals with the education and knowledge needed, to make them capable of being the country's main human resource which society can rely on to cope with international progress. The higher Education system plays a key role in creating links with other educational organisations, domestically, regionally and around the world (El-Hawat 2003).

The universities in Libya started in the early 1950s with the establishment of the Libyan University, with campuses in both Benghazi and Tripoli. It gradually grew to incorporate faculties of Arts and Education, Science, Economics and Commerce, Law, and Agriculture. The Libyan University was then divided into

two separate and independent universities - the University of Tripoli and the University of Benghazi, later renamed the University of AlFateh and the University of Gar-Yunis. Due to the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education through the 1980s and 1990s, the two universities were restructured and others were established resulting in 13 universities by 1995, consisting altogether of 76 specialized faculties and more than 344 specialized scientific departments El-Hawat (2003). Due to recent policy changes, the number of universities has been reduced to nine as listed in the table (2.2) below.

Table 2: Universities in Libya

| University | Established | Location | Enrolment |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Benghazi | 1955 | Benghazi | 45,000 |
| Tripoli | 1957 | Tripoli | 75,000 |
| Sebha | 1983 | Sebha | 9,000 |
| Al-Zawyah | 1988 | Al-Zawyah | 26,000 |
| Mergeb | 1988 | Khoums | 18,000 |
| Tahhadi | 1988 | Sirte | 8,500 |
| Omar El Mukhtar | 1989 | Al-Baida | 12,000 |
| Graduate studies Academy | 1998 | Tripoli | 2,600 |
| Nasir | 2001 | Tarhuna | 400 |
| Total of students | | 176500 | |

Source : (Clark 2004)

2.6 Teaching English as a foreign language

The English language has never been a priority in Libyan education. For almost 40 years, it has been marginalised. The syllabus, which was taught to students in school, was never assessed and not fit for purpose.

After the air raid against the Gaddafi regime led by the United States of America and the United Kingdom in mid-April 1986, the Minister of Education consequently made the decision in 1986 to stop teaching foreign languages in Libyan schools and universities. The decision badly affected the future of education in Libya. Ten years later (1996) English language was reintroduced into the education system at a later stage (seventh grade). The lack of exposure to the language for over a decade caused a decline in English standards. Furthermore, a lack of contact with the outside world, especially English speaking countries, has contributed to the decline of language facilities. The English language in Libya is considered as a foreign language rather than as a second language. This is because outside the classroom, English is rarely used and the classroom instruction is most likely the only input for language learning. Therefore, learners receive limited target language input and have limited language-learning time, unlike the second language learning situations where the target language is used outside the classroom.

Teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Libya has gone through several phases, Sawani (2009) pointed out that during the 1970s and until the mid-1980s, learning English was a compulsory component of the

Libyan schools and universities. However, in 1986, teaching and learning of English were completely cancelled. This was due to the political forces, which deeply influenced the educational system at that time. This in turn, meant that the teachers of English were made jobless or otherwise had to teach other subjects such as history and geography. At that time students were unaware of the problem until they finished their secondary school and became university students where their inability to study many subjects in English became evident. The philosophy behind the act of abolishing English was certainly not convincing. The former regime stated that for the national interest of the coming generations, a newly introduced subject called "Political Awareness" replaced English. The essence of this subject was concerned with teaching Gaddafi's eccentric views about politics as explained in his so-called Green Book. One of the justifications offered by the former regime regarding the abolishment of English as a school subject was that English was being paid too much attention at the expense of Arabic, which accordingly needed to be upheld. In fact, Arabic itself suffered from neglect even more severely than English did during Gaddafi's rule. Learning Arabic was thoroughly downgraded, an issue that has negative reflections on the students' general reading, writing and speaking skills. English was later brought back to the educational system during Gaddafi's rule, but after students and teachers were filled with frustration. The students were presented with poor learning material with the absence of effective teaching aids and methods. Teachers were also discouraged, being left in an embarrassing situation as lack of practice cast a shadow on their self-confidence and efficiency concerning teaching English.

Hence, even those who were linguistically competent felt reluctant to use English.

Because of the negative consequences of the banning of English, in a new curriculum for English language for secondary education was developed. The new course books, titled *English for Libya* adopted a supposedly communicative approach to language teaching and learning and focussed on the usage of everyday language on paper but in practice, this had a limited effect. Orafi and Borg (2009) indicate that the new English curriculum has a wider scope, which was an obvious withdrawal from its predecessor, where listening and speaking skills had not been addressed. Many teachers ignored teaching these skills to their students thinking that they will be achieved automatically. (Hinkel 2006) argue that in language learning in general, the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing should be taught as separate and different cognitive domains because each of these skills complements the other. As an English teacher, teaching in secondary schools from 2000 to 2003, the English language curriculum was based on traditional educational philosophy and was teacher-centred. There was no time for extra language activities to be done in class due to overcrowded classes. Because of the limited class time and overcrowded classes it was difficult if not impossible, to practice speaking and listening skills. Large crowded classes put huge demands on the teacher. Based on experience and speaking from a teacher's perspective, this curriculum only focused on memorisation of grammatical structures and translating texts, which demotivated the students to learn the language. Azeemullah (2012:01) states:

The primary task is to look into the aims of the curricula and their content making them more relevant to the regional and local needs as the country moves towards a new path of social or economic development. A major challenge in education in Libya is to raise the quality in most of its schools and its institutions of higher learning by allocating suitable resources to the field of education.

Another drawback was the absence of opportunity to use English anywhere other than the language class, which acted as a de-motivating factor among students. The students seem to have no reading habits, coarsened by the limited availability of newspapers, books and journals in English. The lack of exposure of the students to the English language made the teaching task even more difficult for the teachers. Learning the widely spoken languages of the world was neglected over 42 years. The English learning situation of today is indeed disastrous with so many Libyans missing the opportunity to communicate in English effectively.

There are many problems facing the educational system in general and the teaching of English in particular. Mohsen (2014) claims that through his experience in the field of teaching English at the university level, he has been in direct contact with great numbers of students who belong to different social ranks and come from diverse geographical areas in Libya and the Arab world. Mohsen (2014) states that the performance of many students is poor in language. Due to these different problems in teaching English in the different school levels, university students are still weak in this language. According to Mohsen (2014), the Ministry of Education, is aware of the challenges of

teaching English as a foreign language in the different stages of the educational system, but due to many factors, the educational system is still suffering a lot of problems in teaching this language including the following:

1. The necessary conditions are lacking (time, classrooms, teaching aids, native speakers, and direct language exposure).
2. The performance of students is unsatisfactory, and their capabilities are insufficient.
3. Some teachers believe in teaching language through grammar; i.e. they focus heavily on grammatical rules on the one hand, but they neglect to focus on the language itself.
4. Some teachers think that the right method to teach language is through the language itself; i.e. they avoid using the mother tongue – for instance Arabic – in the class. They keep teaching in English.
5. Despite eight years studying English as a foreign language in Libyan schools (2 years in the fifth and sixth primary Classes, 3 preparatory classes and 3 secondary classes), most students still have no real acquisition of the language. This is a great problem as millions of Libyan dinars are spent for nothing.
6. Employing under qualified teachers of English has badly added to the problems of teaching English. They badly need long-term training.

Mohsen (2014) also argues that because of the different complications in teaching English in the different stages of education, university students are still weak in this language, as they are unable to use materials, which are written in English. Teachers who teach English for the different specialisations in the university as a course for specific purposes in general, have no

knowledge about specialised English in which students are exposed to texts concerning their specialisations, for example, a teacher, who teaches English for Physics students, does not have the necessary knowledge of physics terms. Mohsen (2014) argues that it is very necessary to organise seasonal regional and international training conferences where Libyan teachers of English can attend and contribute. Mohsen (2014) also recommends that they have local seminars and training workshops in which printed materials are distributed and the teachers can benefit from the experiences of their colleagues in other countries.

Another difficulty, which effects the teaching of English, is the lack of the use of technology. Saaid (2010) states that the goal of integrating technology in the classroom is to change the classroom atmosphere and to make the learning process more interesting. However, many teachers find this difficult without appropriate training. Technology should be an integral part of teacher preparation programmes. Lack of teacher's ability to integrate technology and lack of training clearly are closely related. Difficulties in integrating technology in teaching include access to equipment, training, personal comfort levels, availability of equipment, and time (Emhamed and Krishnan 2011), which is the case in Libya.

2.7 The place of grammar in the Libyan context

In Libya, grammar plays an important role in teaching both English and Arabic. Many teachers still teach about grammar and general texts for reading which do not enhance students' communicative skills. The students themselves believe that English language does not fall in their specialisation and they complain that they were not taught English correctly at school. This situation propagates negatively and has bad effects on the performance of those students in the field of work after graduation. The English language teaching approaches used by educators in Libyan schools and universities have not been influenced by the major developments of second language teaching and learning theories and approaches, where the implementation of the 1983 communicative curriculum relegated grammar to a less important position in the 1980s and early 1990s. According to Alahirsh (2014), all subjects at the university are taught by well-educated Libyans or foreign lecturers, mostly from India and a few from other Arab and African countries. Alahirsh (2014) indicates that there is no fixed curriculum in university departments; therefore, EFL lecturers have to choose their own materials based on the randomly selected syllabus provided by the Head of the department, which lacks clear objectives and outcomes. The responsibility of the lecturer lies in searching for and determining what they believe to be suitable for their students, from their own materials or from the limited materials provided by their department.

Again, the Libyan educational authorities have recently called for a shift from the Grammar-translation method to the communicative approach (Emhamed

and Krishnan 2011). However, in reality, many EFL teachers still choose the Grammar-translation method due to the pressures of examinations, the large number of students in the class and the highly prescriptive course schedules (Saaid, 2010), and university level teaching is no exception. This method dominates the university classrooms, as it fits well with traditional concepts that see activities such as application of grammatical structures, memorization of isolated vocabulary, and translating and understanding reading texts as very important methods for teaching and learning a language. The approach also caters for the highly examination-oriented system in Libyan universities that encourages teachers to prioritise grammatical explanations over communicative activities. In addition, the traditional Libyan methodology highly values the role of memorisation, and this seems to be the most common strategy in the teaching of vocabulary and grammar.

Although many new approaches have been developed concerning the teaching of English grammar, it still has not received the attention it deserves in Libyan schools and universities. The dated education system suffers from many drawbacks. Individual lecturers improvise teaching materials. In addition, teachers and lecturers are still using the traditional methods of teaching where the only role of the student inside the class is to learn the rules, which are presented to them through Arabic translation, and then apply these rules mechanically to given drills and exercises. Another disadvantage is the lack of appropriate technological equipment and the inadequate language learning facilities at universities, in addition to the crowded classes in which the students are unable to receive the necessary attention to practise their

communicative skills effectively. Furthermore, the learning environment is very hostile; the English language is rarely heard or visible in airports, adverts, hospitals and shopping areas that do not encourage the use of the English language.

2.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided an overview of the Education system in Libya. It also outlines the status of English language in Libya. It has also shed light on the role of teaching English language and grammar in Libyan education and the challenges of Higher Education. The following chapter critically reviews the literature concerning grammar.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

The value of reviewing the literature is “*to get a sense of what we already know about a particular question or problem, to understand how it has been addressed methodologically, and to figure out where we need to go next with our research*” (Norris and Ortega 2006: 5). This chapter aims to critically review the role and status of grammar in language teaching which has long been a topic for heated debate and conflicting views.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the rise of the grammar-translation method and the audio-lingual method, grammar played a key role in language education and constituted the subject matter that students learned at school. However, in the 1970s, grammar lost its popularity to the benefit of the communicative approach, which led to research on whether grammar should be taught, or not. This chapter aims to contrast and compare grammar theories, views and models in line with the research objectives. The chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, it discusses and compares key definitions and interpretations of grammar along different periods of time. It reviews the different types of grammar (Traditional, structural, transformational-generative, functional and pedagogical grammar) assessing their strengths and weaknesses. It also provides a historical overview of the teaching of

grammar and the place of grammar in all the different teaching methods and approaches. These discussions regarding the different methods of language teaching, which have emerged from the diverse views of learning a language, will help to establish the understanding of the role of grammar in language teaching and learning. The second part of this chapter will deal with the attitudes and beliefs of students and teachers on the place and role that grammar holds in second/foreign language learning and teaching, in order to obtain a better understanding of how best grammar can be taught best in the Libyan context.

3.1 Defining grammar

In order to review the role and status of grammar in teaching a foreign language it is important to begin by giving a definition of grammar. Defining grammar is not a straightforward matter. There are innumerable definitions, which are influenced by the many approaches to grammar teaching. Although it is quite difficult to give a universally accepted definition of grammar, attempts have been made by a number of scholars to describe and determine what grammar is. This section will provide numerous definitions by different scholars in different periods of time with the aim of comparing and contrasting these definitions and also to stress the fact that these definitions are overlapping. Each author seems to say the same thing but putting their own spin on the definition. Mayhill et al. (2013:103) argue, *“One challenge confronting any researcher of grammar is the multiplicity of meanings and connotations that the word evokes”*.

Chomsky (1965:35) states, "*Grammar is not a description of the performance of a speaker but rather of his linguistic competence*". Chomsky (1965) considers language as an extremely rich and complex system, which is more than just a simple series of associations between words that are linearly ordered. On the other hand, Jespersen (1933:01) gives another definition:

"Grammar deals with the structure of languages, English grammar with the structure of English, French grammar with the structure of French, etc. Language consists of words, but the way in which these words are modified and joined together to express thoughts and feelings differs from one language to another"

Jespersen (2003) explains that the grammar of each language constitutes a system of its own, where each element stands in a certain relation to, and is more or less dependent on, all the other elements. A similar view is expressed through Harmer's (1991:12) definition "*grammar is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language*". Harmer (1991:12) emphasises that grammar rules provide the "*skeleton on which any number of different sentences can be created.*"

Widdowson (1990:82) defines grammar as "*the name we give to the knowledge of how words are adopted and arranged to form sentences*". Widdowson (1997) indicates that the main role of grammar is to provide a link between words and contexts, and that it is vital for learners to understand how

grammar works together with words and contexts to achieve meaningful communication. Although Widdowson's (1990) definition resembles the two definitions stated above, in that grammar deals with the knowledge of rules used for combining words to make sentences, Widdowson (1997) seems to connect his definition with the communicative context in which the words appear.

Similarly, Batstone (1994:03) states "*language without grammar can leave you handicapped*". He claims that a study of grammar (syntax and morphology) reveals a structure and regularity, which lies at the basis of language and enables a person to talk of the language system. Batstone (1994:4) gives a definition of grammar by stating "*Grammar consists of two fundamental ingredients –syntax and morphology- and together they help us to identify grammatical forms which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning*". It is noticed from Batstone 's (1994) definition that he links together both structure and meaning. Batstone (1994) considers that grammar is a key component to receptive (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Radford gives another definition, (1997:1) he asserts that:

"Grammar is seen as the study of the syntax and morphology of sentences. Syntax is the system of rules that cover the order of words in a sentence. It describes how rules are arranged in terms of their position and distribution. Morphology on the other hand is the system of rules that cover the formation of words".

According to Radford (1997) grammar is traditionally concerned not just with the principles which determine the formation of words, phrases, and

sentences, but also with the principles which govern their interpretation.

Similarly, Richards (2002:230) defines grammar as:

"A description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language".

Larsen- Freeman (2002) suggests that in order to achieve a better fit between grammar and communication, grammar should not be thought of as a discrete set of meaningless, decontextualized, static structures. Larsen-Freeman argues that grammatical structures not only have (morphosyntactic) form, they are also used to express meaning (semantics) in context appropriate use (pragmatics). Furthermore, Larson-Freeman (2002) points out that grammar is defined in a way that redirects its meaning into a different angle from that which grammar normally takes in the minds of ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers. According to Larsen-Freeman (2002:105) *"grammar not only consists of rules which govern form; it consists of knowing when to use these forms to convey meanings that match the person's intentions in particular contexts"*.

Kennedy (2003) considers grammar as a linguist's description of language, usually expressed in terms of rules, which deals with word forms (morphology) and word order or sentence structure (syntax). Kennedy (2003:01) defines grammar as *"a set of cognitive rules or principles which combine words or parts of words to express certain notions and ideas"*.

Another definition is given by Crystal (2004:26) who defines grammar as *“the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language.”* Crystal (2004) specifies that grammar can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English.

Another meaning is given by Swan (2005:07) who defines grammar as being *“a limited set of devices which are used for expressing a few kinds of necessary meaning that cannot be conveyed by referential vocabulary alone”*. Swan (2005) concludes that grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed in order to convey meaning.

Ur (2009:03) defines grammar as: *“the way language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone.”* Moreover, Ur (2009) stresses that grammar may also serve to express time relations, singular/plural distinctions and many other aspects of meaning. Ur (2009) goes on to explain that there are rules which govern how words have to be manipulated and organised in order to express these meanings. From her point of view, a competent speaker of the language will be able to apply these rules to convey his or her chosen meaning effectively and acceptably. Another definition is given by Thornbury (2009:13) who defines grammar as “a

description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account for the meaning these words convey.” Thornbury (2009) claims that grammar is partly the study of what forms or structures are possible in a language. He also considers grammar as a process for making the speakers’ or hearers’ meaning clear when there is no contextual information. Richards and Schmidt (2013:251) provide a definition of grammar in their Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics as

“A description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the grammar language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language. It may or may not include the description of the sounds of a language”

A more recent definition is given by Gartland and Smolkin (2015 :01) who indicate that grammar:

“In general, is a set of rules that explain how a system operates, and in language, grammar typically refers to syntax (the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in language), morphology (the study of how words are formed in a language) in addition to semantics (the meaning of words and the vocabulary choices a person employs.”

The following table provides all the former definitions of grammar in chronological order for the purpose of contrasting the different definitions of grammar at different points of time.

Table 3: illustrates some of the many definitions of grammar

| SOURCE | DEFINITIONS OF GRAMMAR |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Jespersen (1933:01) | <i>“Grammar deals with the structure of languages, English grammar with the structure of English, French grammar with the structure of French, etc. Language consists of words, but the way in which these words are modified and joined together to express thoughts and feelings differs from one language to another”</i> |
| Harmer (1991:12) | <i>“The description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language”.</i> |
| Widdowson (1991:82) | <i>“The name we give to the knowledge of how words are adopted and arranged to form sentences”</i> |
| Batstone (1994:4) | <i>“Grammar consists of two fundamental ingredients –syntax and morphology- and together they help us to identify grammatical forms which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning”.</i> |
| Radford, (1997:1) | <i>“Grammar is seen as the study of the syntax and morphology of sentences. Syntax is the system of rules that cover the order of words in a sentence. It describes how rules are arranged in terms of their position and distribution. Morphology on the other hand is the system of rules that cover the formation of words”</i> |
| Richards (2002:230) | <i>"A description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language”.</i> |
| Larsen-Freeman (2002:105) | <i>“Grammar not only consists of rules which govern form; it consists of knowing when to use these forms to convey meanings that match the person’s intentions in particular contexts”</i> |
| Kennedy (2003:01) | <i>“A set of cognitive rules or principles which combine words or parts of words to express certain notions and ideas”.</i> |
| Crystal (2004:26) | <i>“Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language.”</i> |
| Swan (2005:07) | <i>“a limited set of devices which are used for expressing a few kinds of necessary meaning that cannot be conveyed by referential vocabulary alone”</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Thornbury (2009:13) | <i>“A description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account for the meaning these words convey.”</i> |
| Ur (2009:03) | <i>“The way language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone.”</i> |
| Richards and Schmidt (2013:251) | <i>“A description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the grammar language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language. It may or may not include the description of the sounds of a language”</i> |
| Gartland and Smolkin (2015 :01) | <i>“Grammar In general, is a set of rules that explain how a system operates, and in language, grammar typically refers to syntax (the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in language), morphology (the study of how words are formed in a language) in addition to semantics (the meaning of words and the vocabulary choices a person employs.”</i> |

Source: compiled by the present researcher

It is clear from all the definitions above that two main views have been expressed. One implies a more structural dimension looking at grammar from a constricted perspective of syntax and morphology. This is evident in the definitions of Jespersen (1993), Harmer (1991), Radford (1997), and Kennedy (2003) who all seem to modify grammar as being concerned with how words are formed and distributed in a sentence. Unlike the definitions, which emphasise a more traditional view of grammar, the second view expressed in a number of definitions listed above, carries a more comprehensive meaning, which have been expanded to mean a little more than just morphology and syntax. Scholars like Batstone (1994), Richards (2002), Larson- Freeman (2002), Crystal (2004), Swan (2005), Thornbury (2009), Ur (2009) and

Gartland and Smolkin (2015), all tend to have a broader understanding of grammar where the focus is on grammar and communication at the same time.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the definitions above is that grammar can be a slippery concept, which lacks a unifying agreement about how grammar is perceived. While the resulting proliferations of the definitions of grammar provide useful insights and views, they are often overlapping, saying almost the same thing, even though they are stated differently. Grammar means different things to different people; however, key authors appear to agree on the fact that grammar is a vital part of learning a language. Some scholars emphasise the descriptive and prescriptive aspect of grammar while others consider that grammar is not just about rules of language but grammar is concerned with the way words are formed and structured in a sentence using these rules, in order to convey precise meanings in a communicative context.

For the purpose of this study, the view that grammar is the backbone of any language is supported. This study is consistent with ideas expressed in the previous definitions emphasising the broader definition of grammar because the most important task of a second/foreign language lecturer is to help the learner to practice grammar effectively in everyday language use. In order for this to happen, the lecturers need to look at grammar from a more comprehensive perspective focusing on an integrated grammar within a communicative approach. For the benefit of this study, grammar can be defined as rules of a language, which are used to organise words into many

different structures to convey various meanings within a communicative context.

3.2 The importance of grammar in second language learning

Grammar as a research topic has always taken centre stage in foreign/ second language teaching and learning. According to Palmer (1984:09), one of the proponents of grammar teaching and who considers it as a vital part of language teaching, states:

“The central part of any language is its grammar, and this should be of vital interest to any intelligent educated person. If it has not been of such interest, then the fault must be in the way in which it has been presented.”

The teaching of grammar has often generated conflicting views. There are several pros and cons of teaching grammar highlighted in the literature by its advocates and opponents. Thornbury (2009) argues that no other issue has preoccupied theorists and practitioners as much as the grammar debate which has brought about a split of views, specifically those who claim that grammar should not be taught at all, and others who see that grammar should be given a central role in English language teaching. It cannot be denied that grammar teaching helps learners understand the nature of language and that language consists of complicated patterns that are combined through sound or writing to create meaning. Some researchers (e.g. Cook 2001, Kennedy 2003, Widodo 2006, and Thornbury 2009, Ellis 2006, Wu 2005, Azar 2007) argue that,

without a good command of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained. For them, grammar is thought to provide the basis for language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Willis (2009), learners often avoid speaking because they are worried about getting their grammar right. This goes to show that the lack of grammar knowledge and use is a barrier, which hinders students' ability and confidence to speak. Widodo (2006) suggests that in listening and speaking, grammar plays a crucial role in grasping and expressing spoken language. In reading, grammar assists learners to understand sentence interrelationship in a paragraph, a passage or a text, whereas in the context of writing, grammar allows the learners to put their ideas into comprehensible sentences which allows them to communicate successfully in written form. In the case of vocabulary, grammar provides a pathway for learners to show how some lexical items should be combined into a good sentence in order to convey meaningful expressions (Widodo 2006).

Cook (2001) also considers grammar to be an important part of language teaching and learning. He claims that grammar is a unique aspect of language, which consists of features that do not occur in other mental processes and that are not found in animal languages. According to Cook (2001), grammar is in some way easier for second language learners (L2) to study than other aspects of language because it is highly systematic and its effects are usually obvious in the second language learners' speech. Cook (2001:20) concludes: "*for these reasons much second acquisition research has concentrated on grammar*". She considers grammar as the central area of language around

which other areas such as pronunciation and vocabulary revolve. According to him, however important the other components of the language may be, they are all connected to each other through grammar. Larsen-Freeman (2001) also expresses her view of the importance place grammar holds, by suggesting that grammar should constitute a fifth skill that goes along with the four other skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Azar (2007a) , who is a proponent of (GBT) Grammar-Based Teaching in which grammar serves as the starting point and foundation for the development of all language skills — speaking, listening, writing, and reading, claims that an important aspect of grammar teaching is that it helps learners discover the nature of language. Azar (2007a) also indicates that grammar helps learners understand that language consists of predictable patterns that make what is said, read and written comprehensible. Azar (2007) also points out that without grammar, there would only be individual words or sounds, pictures, and body language to communicate meaning.

Kennedy (2003) highlights the importance of grammar and its connection to speaking, reading and writing. Kennedy (2003:01) emphasises *“If we do not know the grammar of our language we would not be able to understand or speak or write”*. He considers grammar as a system that enables learners to extract meaning out of sounds.

Mulroy (2004:53) points out, "*Grammar describes the rules by which speech is organized and thus gains its meaning*". Mulroy (2004) clarifies, students who are unable to understand grammar lack any method for analysing meaning when it is not intuitively obvious. In other words, if a student cannot interpret meaning, he or she certainly cannot reproduce meaning.

Ellis (2006) and Wu (2005) assert that grammar is an essential part of L2 instruction. Ellis (2006:86) states "*there is now convincing indirect and direct evidence to support the teaching of grammar*". According to Wu, (2005:48), the role of grammar is important because "*not only does it help learners to improve their writing skills, but also it helps them in reading and listening alike*". Regardless of the controversy among researchers, teachers and methodologists, "*grammar teaching has continued to be one of the mainstays in English language training worldwide*" (Hinkel and Fotos 2002)

As a practitioner Azar (2006) points out that the goal is not for students to know a lot of grammar. The goal of grammar teaching is to help students create an interlanguage that is increasingly fluent and accurate in the use of English structures in meaningful communication.

Azar (2007:02) states:

"Through the eyes of many practitioners, grammar teaching is vibrantly alive and well (and has been throughout our careers), ever-evolving in innovative ways, and an integral

component of effective second-language instruction for many students.”

In Libya, like many other countries, a great emphasis is put on teaching grammar. Learners are taught grammar from when they first start to learn English. Grammar is considered as an essential component of the English curriculum. It also forms an essential part in the Arabic language. Whether in schools, universities or private courses, the main concern that preoccupies teachers and lecturers is monitoring grammar because in essence grammar reflects the meaning and effectiveness of the way language is used. Pollock and Waller (2012) identify grammar as the structure of a language, which needs to be understood so that language can be used effectively. They consider grammar as the *“lifeline to literacy”* (Pollock and Waller 2012:1)

Because of the important role, grammar plays in reinforcing the learners' four language skills, since precise meaning cannot be fully achieved without a good command of grammar, this study argues for the need to integrate grammar in teaching the different language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). As grammar is an important part of the communicative competence, it will enhance the second language learner's ability to comprehend and communicate with others accurately and fluently. As highly quoted by (Didion 1976) *“All I know about grammar, is its infinite power to shift the structure of a sentence, to alter the meaning of that sentence”*

3.3 Types of grammar

Grammar still generates plenty of interest as evidenced by the extensive literature. It is a multi-faceted concept with countless nuances and complex types. Livia (2006) states that there are two major approaches to grammar. They are either formal or functional. Each of these approaches have had their prominences in different points in time. The interrelationship between these two approaches has paved the way for the emergence of four grammatical paradigms. Livia (2006) concludes that the four grammatical paradigms which have emerged are related to different types of grammatical description based on different approaches to language; traditional, structural, transformational generative and functional grammar.

Crystal (1997) however, claims that there are six different types of grammar: descriptive, prescriptive, pedagogical, reference, theoretical and traditional grammar. Cook (2008) distinguishes three main types of grammar, which are traditional, prescriptive and structural grammar. Alduais (2012) indicates that although there are many types of grammar, the main or major schools are traditional, structural and transformational generative grammar, which will be reviewed in this study. Alduais (2012) points out that although the three different schools of grammar analyse and search in the field of grammar, each one of them has different tools, different techniques and different approaches in analysing and presenting the grammar of the English language. They also have different implications regarding the teaching and learning of grammar.

Another type of grammar, which is of importance to this study and therefore will be discussed, is pedagogical grammar. Since pedagogical grammar deals with the teaching of grammar and this study is concerned with the teaching of grammar, it is essential to review this type to put things into perspective.

3.3.1 Traditional grammar

This type of grammar refers to the grammar written by the ancient Greek scholars. It is also known as the prescriptive approach of the eighteenth century grammarians because it is a prescription of how grammar is used (Alduais 2012). Another definition of traditional grammar is given by Burns (2009) as a set of rules which were originally taken from the written classical languages, Greek and Latin .

Valeika and Buitkienė (2003) state that until the end of the sixteenth century, the only grammars in English schools were Latin and Greek grammars, which were used to teach English students to read and write in the lingua franca of Western Europe. The terminology and system of classification, which was developed for the Greek and Latin, were based on the works of Dionysius Thrax. Valeika and Buitkienė (2003) also concluded that when English replaced Latin grammar some English scholars were greatly concerned with refining their language. The most influential grammar of English (published in 1762) was R. Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar which started the age of prescriptive grammar (Valeika and Buitkienė 2003) .

Rama and Agulló (2012:180) indicate that traditional grammar teaching was based on a formal notion of competence which is defined as the *“underlying knowledge of concepts and rules stored in the minds of speakers which equated grammar with syntax and morphology, considering meaning as a totally different linguistic level.”* Rama and Agulló (2012) clarify that the theoretical foundations of this approach are based on both Structuralism and Generativism, two pre-functional linguistic movements. The Structuralism view of language, associated to observable behaviours, was based on the analysis of form (phonology, morphology and syntax) over meaning (semantics), to which it did not pay any attention. On the other hand, Generativism considered that language should not be based on the classification of ‘surface/individual’ structures but rather, on the development of a system of innate and mental rules, which would account for the structural possibilities of a language; it still considered syntax central.

Hinkel and Fotos (2001) claim that it has been noted that for more than 2000 years, studying a second language primarily consisted of grammatical analysis and translation of written forms. They point out that this process of analysing and translating, which was developed for Greek and Latin, divided the target language into eight parts of speech: nouns, verbs, participles, articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions. To learn the language, studying these eight categories in written text and the development of the rules for their use in translation was required.

Drawbacks of traditional grammar started to show when the 18th century grammarians moved beyond the Greek and Roman classics and began the study of English again, using the eight categories mentioned above in generating grammar rules. They realised that the parts of speech could not be used as effectively to analyse a language in which word order and syntax produced grammatical function and where rules often had several exceptions (Valeika and Buitkienė (2003).

It has been noticed that using the framework of the Latin language system does not seem to reflect the realities of a language. It has limited scope which stresses form rather than meaning and function. However, this type of grammar is still being used worldwide, especially when the grammar of a second language is being taught (Hinkel and Fotos 2001). The grammar-translation approach is an example of traditional grammar.

Despite its disadvantages, traditional Grammar may be useful to language teaching and school grammar. In many contexts, it is still believed that traditional grammar is a functionally respected way of teaching people what they should know about language. Traditional grammar has been predominantly used in teaching students in Libyan schools in general and within the English programme at Tripoli University specifically. In the Libyan context, traditional grammar is predominantly used to teach the first language, Arabic. Therefore, the students are relatively familiar with this method. So it is much the same for everyone.

3.3.2 Structural grammar

When world languages were compared and described by linguists in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, they found that using the eight parts of speech as an organisational framework was not suitable. Since many of these world languages had no written form, a change had to be made in the way they were analysed. Therefore, a shift was made to the description of the sound system. Languages were analysed through three subsystems: the sound system, recognised as phonology; the discrete units of meaning produced by sound combinations, known as morphology; and the system of combining units of meaning for communication, identified as syntax. This analysis came to be known as structural or descriptive linguistics (Hinkel and Fotos 2001). The most influential structural linguist was Bloomfield in his book *Language* (1933) which dealt mainly with speech and analysed the sound system.

According to Valeika and Buitkienė (2003), structural linguists prided themselves as being true linguists because they based their analysis on actual English. They classified traditional concepts and methods as being unscientific and they focused their attention on a grammar not influenced by Latin or Greek. The audio-lingual and oral approaches are examples of structural grammar in which language is regarded as a rule governed system, which can be learned through mechanical habit formation.

Although structural grammar brought about a fresh perspective to the teaching and learning of grammar, it had many disadvantages. First, it emphasises structure at the expense of function and meaning. It also does not recognise that the analysis of a relatively small instance sample of language cannot account for the whole language system. Moreover, it does not differentiate between sentences, which have the same structure but different meaning (Livia, 2006).

3.3.3 Transformational generative grammar:

Transformational generative grammar, also known as formal grammar, started as a reaction against both traditional and structural grammar. This school of grammar was developed by Chomsky in the 1950's. It is a mental grammar which is strongly influenced by logic, mathematics and psychology (Alduais 2012). It deals with how sentences are generated in a language. In addition, transformational generative grammar attempts to define rules, which can generate an indefinite number of grammatical sentences possible in a language.

Richards and Schmidt (2013) define transformational generative grammar as an early version of the theory that emphasised the relationships among sentences that can be seen as transformations of each other. Richards and Schmidt (2013) give an example to clarify the relationships among simple active declarative sentences (e.g. *He went to the store*), negative sentences (*He did not go to the store*), and questions (*Did he go to the store?*). They state that such relationships can be accounted for by transformational rules.

Transformational generative grammar attempts to describe a native speaker's linguistic competence by outlining linguistic descriptions as rules for 'generating' an infinite number of grammatical sentences. Transformational generative grammar is based on the belief that the structure of language is determined by the structure of the human mind, and that all languages share some common universal characteristics. In addition, the creativity of human language; specifically, the ability of all native speakers to produce and understand an unlimited number of sentences that they have never heard before, must also be accounted for (Thinkers 2009).

Richards and Rogers (2001) indicate that according to this school of grammar, teaching all expressions and sentences that students need is impossible because language is found to be infinitely varied. Therefore, the only achievable goal is to teach the system that makes language production possible. Some of the criticism directed at transformational generative grammar is its emphasis on speaker listener's competence at the expense of the ability to use the language appropriately in real communication. In addition, transformational generative grammar still emphasises form and does not account for social and structural differences. Moreover, Chomsky (1957) did not take any steps towards promoting the use of transformational generative grammar in teaching which resulted in it being overlooked by teachers of grammar.

3.3.4 Functional grammar

Transformational generative grammar focused on the speakers' competence, it was then developed into what Hymes (1972) named communicative competence which focused on pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects of language. Functional grammar is a linguistic theory, which was first proposed by a Dutch linguist named Simon Dik in the 1970's. It was renamed functional discourse grammar in the 1990s. This theory is called functional because it states that all elements, whether affixes, words, phrases, or sentences, have semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic functions. According to Dik's functional grammar, semantic function refers to the role participants play in the sentence's action, such as agent or recipient. The various perspectives, such as subject or object, are analysed as the syntactic function. Pragmatic function concerns the meaning of the constituent in reference to its context.

Similarly, Halliday (1994) points out that functional grammar is so-called because its conceptual framework is a functional one rather than a formal one. It is functional in three distinct senses: in its interpretation of texts, of the system, and of the elements of linguistic structures. Functional grammarians can analyse linguistic utterances as pragmatic, semantic, morphosyntactic, or phonological. Functional grammar is designed to account for how the language is used.

Several linguistic theories are also known as functional grammars, as opposed to formal grammars. The most famous of these is systemic functional

grammar, which was first published by British linguist Michael Halliday in 1961 (Derewianka 2001). Richards and Rogers (2014) states that Halliday's functional account of language use is a linguistic theory of communication which is favoured in communicative language teaching. Richards and Rogers (2014) claims that in numerous influential papers and books Halliday provided fresh insights on the functions of language which complement Hymes's views of communicative competence.

3.3.5 Pedagogical grammar

Keck and Kim (2014:01) define pedagogical grammar as “*a research domain that is concerned with how grammar can most effectively be taught and learned in the second language (L2) classroom*”. Pedagogical grammar depends on critical assumptions about the nature of language and its relationship to language learning (Tomlin, 1994). When grammar is adopted for teaching purposes, it is referred to as a pedagogical grammar which belongs to a branch of linguistics known as applied linguistics (Burner 2005). This type of grammar is a combination of grammatical analysis and instruction, designed for second language learners. Newby (2008) defines pedagogical grammar as measures taken by teachers, learners, material designers, grammarians, etc. to facilitate the development of grammatical competence and the skill of using grammar. Newby (2008) claims that pedagogical grammar, which is a grammar developed for learners of a foreign language, draws on two separate but interrelated areas of theory. The first is descriptive models of grammar, which can be incorporated into pedagogical reference

grammars and teaching materials, formulated in ways which make the description accessible to the learner; and secondly, theories of second-language acquisition, which provide the basis for classroom methods. Newby (2015) Some of the main tasks of pedagogical grammar are as follows:

1. Setting grammatical objectives for a syllabus, school textbook, lesson or teaching sequence;
2. Specifying grammar rules and making them available to learners by explanation, illustration, exemplification, discovery of rules by students themselves etc.;
3. setting learning aims for specific exercise and activities in other words determining what role a particular exercise might play in enhancing learning;
4. Methodology devising and evaluating grammar exercises and activities to be given to students;
5. Testing grammatical competence and performance.

Newby (2015) indicates that In order to design a pedagogy of grammar it is necessary to base it on three general areas of theory. The first is a theory of grammar, which provides an understanding of what language is and how it functions as a communication system. A theory of grammar can be used for the specification of content and teaching objectives and formulation of pedagogical grammar rules; categories of syllabus design; basis for use-based methodology. Second, a theory of learning/acquisition – which provides an understanding of acquisition processes and of the learner’s cognitive, affective and functional needs. The last is; *methodology* which provides a

knowledge of a wide range of methods and classroom techniques and how, when and whether to apply them. Newby (2015) specifies that methodology must always go hand-in-hand with theories of learning and exercises must be selected based on their potential to optimise learning efficiency.

In the light of the above views and arguments, it can be suggested that grammar is an important component in most languages and therefore plays an essential role in the teaching process. However, with the emergence of teaching methods based on learning theories and approaches, the focus on grammar was challenged causing a decline in the status of grammar, which influenced the implications of grammar teaching. Consequently, a revival of grammar was necessary which caused linguists and language educators to seriously review and reconsider the status of grammar in language teaching and learning (Zain and Rohani 2007).

Recently there has been a shift of focus to an approach, which draws on all the grammar models. Widdowson (1990) claims that it is a fault to concentrate only on functional aspects of grammar while neglecting completely the form of that grammar. Approaches, which rely heavily on the ability to use language appropriately, can lead to a lack of grammatical knowledge. Consequently, an eclectic approach is needed to provide a middle ground between form and function. The grammar teachers themselves should put this type of approach together. Therefore, the importance of knowing the grammatical paradigms and their effects is essential for teachers in order to construct the most

appropriate approach, which suits the learners' levels and needs. The next section will discuss the two approaches to teaching (inductive and deductive)

3.4 The inductive and deductive approach to teaching

The terms inductive and deductive are related to how grammar is taught and acquired. With a deductive approach, a rule is first given and then studied. With an inductive approach a grammatical phenomenon is studied followed by tasks that help the learners to form generalisations about the language (Askeland 2013). Widodo (2006), considered the deductive approach as being derived from the notion that deductive reasoning works from the general to the specific, from which rules, principles, concepts or theories are presented first, and then their applications are treated. In teaching grammar, the deductive approach can also be known as rule driven learning, where a grammar rule is explicitly presented to the learners and followed by practice applying the rule.

After conducting a study, Nazari and Alahyar (2012) found that while some teachers tended to avoid teaching grammar and even answering students' grammar questions, some put a great emphasis on grammar. Nazari and Alahyar (2012) found that the former, who applied inductive approaches, confessed that teaching grammar was difficult for them. However, the latter, who applied deductive approaches, seemed more comfortable with and confident about utilizing traditional ways to teach and explain grammar. According to Larsen-Freeman (2015:268) "*research on learner preferences has shown that learners favour a deductive approach, where they are provided with the rules*".

This seems true with Libyan learners; the teacher takes the main role, teaching students in intensive lessons designed according to a certain design of the curriculum. The task of the grammar lecturer is to explain and give full details about the grammar rule. Using the deductive approach in teaching his is not the case for English grammar only, but the teaching process in general is done using the deductive approach. Although this approach has been heavily criticised, it has proven to be effective in some cases.

The inductive approach is originated from inductive reasoning and asserts that a reasoning progression advances from particulars (such as observations, measurements or data) to generalities like rules, laws, concepts or theories (Widodo 2006). With reference to pedagogical grammar, most experts argue that the inductive approach can also be known as rule discovery learning. It proposes that a teacher teaches grammar by presenting some examples of sentences at the beginning of the lesson. In this sense, learners understand grammatical rules from the examples. This approach tries to highlight grammatical rules implicitly in which the learners are encouraged to conclude the rules from the examples given by the teachers. This method of teaching provides students with opportunities to negotiate meanings through grammatical activities, which they employ interactively. This means that learners are at the centre of the process and they produce the rule after understanding the meaning. Before learners produce any grammatical features, they should recognise the value of the relationship between form and meaning in a sentence, but sometimes the difficulty lies in the fact that the

learner may lose sight of that relationship and fail to comprehend the rule. This could be the consequence if their lecturers do not provide them with knowledge, which helps them to be aware of how to use their grammatical knowledge. This approach may also be less effective in some contexts; Widodo (2006: 128) stated some disadvantages of teaching English grammar inductively are as follows:

1. The approach is time and energy consuming as it requires learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
2. The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
3. The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
4. It encourages the teacher to design data or materials taught carefully and systematically.
5. The approach may frustrate the learners if their personal learning style, or their past learning experience (or both) lead them to prefer simply to be told the rule.

Freeman (2015) indicates that researchers have conducted a number of studies, which examined the efficacy of inductive and deductive approaches. However, neither approach has been consistently favoured, possibly because of the different designs or different populations on which the research has been conducted. In the same vein, Richard and Rodgers, (2001) argue that it seems quite difficult to apply a specific method of teaching grammar in a lesson. No single method can be said to satisfy the needs of all the learners, although some applied linguists consider that teaching grammar inductively is likely to

be the best, whereas others see that a combination of methods would be more effective. Therefore, Griffiths (2004) indicates that where methods and approaches have failed to deliver, awareness has grown that each of these proposed methods and approaches have their strengths. A combination of these methods and approaches, can be used to enhance each other which resulted in an emergence of a general movement towards eclecticism where methods are chosen to suit the students and the situation involved rather than because they conform to an inflexible theory.

3.5 The place of grammar in foreign/second language teaching: an overview

In order to understand fully, the broad nuances and status of grammar, it is important to consider some of the most important developments in its history. The teaching of grammar has been strongly disputed over the last 30 years Ellis (2002). This argument led to the belief that formal grammar instruction would only increase declarative knowledge (the knowledge of grammatical rules and/or examples) rather than the ability to use forms correctly.

Similarly, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) stress that the role of grammar teaching in second language learning was downplayed with the rise of the communicative approach in the late 1970's. In teaching methods, which relied on a structural syllabus, grammar held a key role. This position was then challenged by Krashen and Terrell (1983) and with the advent of the communicative approach and the natural approach, the argument put forward by Krashen and Terrell (1983), was that teaching grammar does not correlate with acquiring

language. From their point of view, language should be acquired through natural exposure; it should not be learnt through formal instruction.

Petraki and Hill (2010), state that there are unresolved issues about the place of grammar in language learning and teaching. They argue that, the on-going debate is about how to teach grammar, how to integrate grammar into a communicative approach or whether to teach it at all. Long (1983) reviewed twelve studies that examine the effect of formal instruction on the rate/success of second language acquisition. Six of these studies showed that instruction helps, two produced ambiguous results, while the other three showed that instruction does not help, although each of these contained some hints of an advantage for instruction. These studies involved comparisons between learners receiving instruction and learners who experience exposure with or without instruction. Based on this review, Long (1983) drew the conclusion that there is considerable evidence to indicate that formal language instruction does make a difference. This seems especially useful in the early stages of second language acquisition (SLA) and in environments where English is considered as a foreign language. Recent research has stressed the need for formal instruction so that learners can gain high levels of accuracy. This is evident in studies conducted by many researchers (e.g. Richards and Rogers 2001, Conrad 2000, Zain and Rohani 2007 and Richards and Rogers (2001), state that grammar has reclaimed its rightful position in language teaching. Currently only a minority of language teaching professionals support the zero option of no form focused instruction which was recommended by Krashen and Terrell (1983) and Mukminatien (2008).

Researchers and applied linguists who rejected Krashen's non-interface position reported sufficient empirical evidence to support the role of explicit grammar instruction. Ellis (2006:102) states, "*There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the teaching of grammar works*". Ellis (1994) and Nassaji (1999) both reported that learners who receive formal instruction learn the language faster than those who do not, and that a sole focus on meaning does not support learners to produce adequate language competence. This view is supported by the work of Pica (2005), through his observation of a large number of content-based classrooms where the target language is English and attention in the class is directed to meaning rather than form. He found that students' production of language was quite fluent; however, it was linguistically inaccurate. Azar (2007) stresses that an important aspect of teaching grammar is that it helps learners discover the nature of language, that is to say that language consists of predictable patterns which make what we say, read, hear and write comprehensible. She further adds that without grammar, there would only be individual words or sounds, pictures, and body expressions to communicate meaning. From Azar's (2007:2) point of view, "*grammar is the weaving that creates the fabric*"

Azar's (2007) practical experience as a language teacher, prompt her to maintain that students without a good knowledge of grammar will have difficulty in both academic reading and writing. This is because the learners are unable to understand how a sentence is structured and how sentences are coherently and cohesively linked together, to create a text. Azar (2007) also

observes that the students in her writing class who were taught grammar had an advantage over those students who were not taught grammar. In line with Azar's view, Mulroy (2003) states that the relationship between knowledge of grammar (linguistic competence) and the ability to use the language (linguistic performance), is that sentences always have and always will contain clauses made up of subjects and predicates. In addition to words which belong to classes which are described as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Mulroy (2003:118) confirms, *"Individuals who understand these concepts have a distinct advantage over others where the use of language is involved – and that means everywhere."*

Conrad (2000) points out that by the end of the 20th century; developments began taking place in grammar teaching and research. Conrad (2000) indicates that there was renewed interest in an explicit focus on form in the classroom, which was evident in publications that not only suggested new approaches to grammar pedagogy, but also argued that students benefit from grammar instruction (e.g., Celce-Murcia, 1991; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell, 1997; Ellis, 1998; Master, 1994).

Similarly, Zain and Rohani (2007) also stress that the dispute about teaching grammar has considerable influence on the development of language teaching practice. This debate resulted in the emergence of different views, approaches and methods in grammar teaching (Zain and Rohani 2007). Likewise, Nassaji and Fotos (2004), assert that recent research has demonstrated the need for formal instruction for learners to achieve high levels of accuracy. This has led

to a revival of grammar teaching, and its role in second language acquisition has become the focus of current research.

According to Silvia (2004), grammar plays a crucial role in teaching English language. Before the 1970's, grammar was considered as an essential part of language teaching. It was believed that a person would not be able to communicate well without knowing the grammatical rules of the language. This belief was challenged by the notion that "*knowledge of the grammatical system of the language was but one of the main components which underlay the notion of communicative competence*" (Richards and Renandya 2002:145). It was within this period that grammar was abandoned. However, Silvia (2004) states that recent research stresses that grammar is too good to be abandoned; without a good command of grammar, language development and communication would be limited.

Larsen-Freeman (2001) believes that grammar should be regarded as a skill to develop rather than a transmission of knowledge. She argues "*it is better to think of teaching 'grammaring' than grammar*" (Larsen-Freeman 2001: 255). Grammar is not only a set of rules that teachers try to implant in students' minds. The aim is to have students use grammatical structures "*accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately.*" According to Larsen-Freeman (2001), the benefits of teaching grammar are then numerous. She sees grammar as an essential component of language, a system that learners can use for their

communicative needs, a tool allowing them to say more than they already know.

The failure of the traditional grammar-centred methods in leading to fluency in the target language brought some researchers and practitioners to consider and re-examine grammar teaching from a different angle. As an alternative to appealing that grammar is ineffective, many researchers have raised the question of how best to integrate grammar into language instruction.

In response to the debatable issue of teaching or not teaching grammar, this study supports the view of including the teaching of grammar in foreign language teaching. In order for a foreign language learner to become accurate and fluent, emphasis should be put on grammar instruction. In the Libyan context, the students tend to have a good background of the grammar rules of the English language, but they seem to have difficulty in applying these rules in writing and speaking. This study intends to assess the learners' and teachers' perceptions about grammar and its role in foreign language teaching at Tripoli University it will also provide evidence of the difficulties learners have with using grammar.

Following the long controversy on the status of grammar in English language teaching, the debate is no longer about whether to teach grammar or not. The disputed issue amongst applied linguists is how best to teach grammar, resulting in the development of many approaches to promote the learners'

success in understanding the grammar of a second language (Nassaji & Fotos 2011).

The next section will discuss the place of grammar in the different language teaching methods and approaches. The approaches and methods are organised into three parts; the dominance of grammar, the decline of grammar and the revival of grammar. This organisation, which was adapted from (Nassaji and Fotos 2011), demonstrates the how grammar is perceived through the history of teaching methods and approaches.

3.6 The dominance of grammar in language teaching methods

For many years, grammar was considered the centre of language pedagogy. The centrality of grammar in language pedagogy stemmed from numerous historical reasons such as the importance attributed to the knowledge of grammar in philosophy and science in the Middle Ages. There was also a close relationship between the study of grammar in medieval disciplines such as law, theology and medicine in which the knowledge of grammar was essential for the development of rhetorical skills.

Another reason for the centrality of grammar in language teaching as stated by Nassaji and Fotos (2011) is the claim that the best way of learning a second language is through the grammar of the first language, which led to the assumption that the grammar of Latin was the best model for studying other

languages. The studying of Latin grammar was also considered as a way of developing the mind.

Cook (2001) indicates that second language learning is more than the transfer of the first language. He states that the first language helps learners when it has elements in common with the second language and hinders them when they differ. Cook (2001) gives an example of a Spanish speaker who may leave out the subject of a sentence when speaking English, saying “is raining” instead of “it is raining”, whereas a French speaker would not because the subject of a sentence may be omitted in Spanish but may not be left out in French. Brown (1998) argues that learning a second language is clearly different from that of a first language. According to Brown (1998) adult second language learners seldom (if ever) achieve the same native competence that children do when learning their first language. The grammar of the first language clearly influences learning the second language, especially at the beginning stages of acquiring it, where students rely on the grammar of their first language to overcome any difficulties. However, with reference to Arabic, this method does not always work because English and Arabic language systems differ widely. They belong to two different linguistic families, which leads to negative interference. (Al-Ahdal *et al.* 2015)

Nassaji and Fotos (2011) state that the emphasis put on grammar was demonstrated in many grammar-based approaches such as the grammar translation method and the audio-lingual method, in addition to other structure

based approaches. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) view these methods as ones, which are centred on the notion that the most difficult aspect of learning a second language is learning the structure of that language. Therefore, it must receive close attention. The first of these grammar-based approaches is the grammar translation method, which is still widely used in some Arab countries.

3.7.1 Grammar translation method

Towards the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the grammar translation method was the predominant method, which emerged from the teaching of Latin. It was used to teach other foreign languages. Grammar as well as translation played an important role in this method (Askeland 2013). It was influenced by teaching the grammatical rules of a language deductively and explicitly (Sundqvist 2012). The grammar translation method also depended on the use of the first language as the means of instruction. Furthermore, oral fluency (communication) in the second language was not important. The main focus was translation from and to the second language (Burner 2005).

The use of the grammar translation method resulted in the inability of the learner to use the language for communication (Celce-Murcia 2001). As evident by (Sanz and Morgan-Short 2004), the grammar translation Method provides learners with explicit information before or during exposure to second language (L2) input, by means of either grammatical explanation or negative evidence in the form of corrective feedback. However, this approach has

produced a host of students who are grammatically competent but communicatively incompetent.

Although the grammar translation method marginalises the role of communication, it is still widely used and preferred in Libyan schools and universities. The students learn and memorise the given rules then many exercises are undertaken. Though officially Libya has made the switch to the more relevant CLT, in reality, the Grammar-Translation method is still favoured and used by many instructors in Libya (Saaid 2010). In the classroom, the instructor stands in front of students in using the grammar-translation method to teach students directly from textbooks. The instructor uses Arabic (the official language) to explain grammar and the meaning of EFL texts, and the students are asked to translate English sentences to Arabic, or vice versa.

Because of using this method of teaching, students' proficiency in English language has deteriorated.

(Latiwish 2003) points out that learning English as a second language in Libya is viewed as a matter of mastering grammatical rules and vocabulary, and many English language curricula and accompanying course books are designed to promote this by memorisation. Many Libyan teachers are also influenced by particular beliefs/culture of learning as in the traditional Libyan classroom, where teachers have more control over students' interaction and contribution in the classroom. In other words, the grammar translation method is applied in the Libyan EFL context because many Libyan EFL teachers have

themselves been taught using some aspects of the grammar translation method during their learning journeys, such as the traditional approaches to learning the Quran, old Arabic poems and some national sayings.

With the rise of structural linguistics at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the focus of language teaching shifted from studying grammar in terms of parts of speech (as in the grammar translation method) to studying a description of the language's structural and phonological characteristics. With the beginning of the Second World War, an urgent need for the ability to speak foreign languages fluently and for oral communication arose which led to the emergence of the direct method and the audio lingual method (Nassaji and Fotos 2011).

3.7.2 The direct method

The direct method, which is also known as the 'oral' or 'natural' method was established in Germany and France. It originated as an alternative to the grammar translation method. The direct method emerged because of the growing interest in teaching language for speaking purposes. Larsen-Freeman (2000) argues that an essential principle of this method was that language was primarily speech. Native language was not to be used in the classroom. The meaning of a word would be demonstrated by using different objects rather than being explained by the teacher. It was noticed that vocabulary was acquired more naturally when it was used in sentences rather than memorised in isolation (Larsen-Freeman 2000). Within this method, grammar is not taught

for the sake of grammar; it aims at teaching the grammar of the language or the grammar that describes the language in action. Richards and Rogers (2014:12) provided the following principles and procedures for the practice of the direct method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language
2. Only every day vocabulary and sentences were taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a graded progression organised around questions and answer exchanges between teachers and students in small intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures, while association of ideas taught abstract vocabulary.
7. Speech and listening comprehension were both taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasised.

Töllinen (2002) argues that although the direct method was a reaction to the grammar translation method for its intensive emphasis on grammar, it was not taught explicitly. The students were expected to extract and comprehend the grammatical rules from the examples given. Despite its persistence in the field of language teaching, the good results the method produced, and the popularity this method gained, the direct method received huge criticism. It was criticised for being heavily dependent on skilful teachers and requiring

longer classroom time. These critiques and observations led researchers to develop a new method that better met the needs of the learners and serve as an effective method of language teaching.

The Direct Method is rarely used in Tripoli University for several reasons; Firstly, most of the classes consist of very large numbers of students, which constrain or reduce applying the activities of such a method. Another reason is that the students themselves are used to receiving information, memorising it and preparing themselves for exams rather than using a discovery (interactive) learning method. In addition, most of the teachers' selected materials are based on grammatical construction and structure rather than classrooms actions, such as involving students in classroom interaction. As Sawani (2009:16) argued, the Direct Method at Libyan universities is rarely used, which is because of several influences:

1. Most of the EFL classes at the Libyan universities consist of very large numbers of students, which constrain or reduce applying the activities of such a method.
2. The students themselves are used to receiving information, memorising it and preparing themselves for exams rather than using a discovery (interactive) learning method.
3. Most of the teachers' selected materials are based on grammatical construction and structure rather than classrooms actions, such as involving students in classroom interaction.

4. Teachers' and learners' beliefs and culture of learning lend themselves to weak interaction and effectiveness within classrooms, which may reduce any activities of using the target language.
5. Libyan EFL culture and style of teaching and learning is influenced by the traditional Libyan way of teaching and learning English such as the Grammar Translation Method or its concepts, where teachers are the central source of information as students are used to having L1 help during most of their EFL classes. In addition, many Libyan classrooms might be influenced by many cultural boundaries that constrain several activities of the Direct Method

3.7.3 The audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method was developed in the United States during the Second World War. It was a consequence of the need for soldiers to learn foreign languages quickly for military purposes. It was also known as the military method. Askeland (2013) points out that this method was influenced by American structuralism and behaviourism, which viewed learning as a process of habit formation, and conditioning; as a result, it considered memorisation of structural patterns essential for L2 learning.

Nassaji and Fotos (2011) state that the audio lingual method shifted its focus from studying grammar in terms of parts of speech to a description of its structural and phonological components. The main aim of this method was learning to communicate and most of the attention was given to oral skills.

Conversation was taught as habit formation. Grammatical forms were not taught explicitly but were extracted from the given examples and uncovered by the learner through rote practice of sentence patterns, memorisation of dialogues and other oral practices (Larsen-Freeman 2000).

In the audio-lingual method, learning grammar was believed to take place through oral repetition of sentences, which led to the overlearning of the grammatical pattern of a language. In this method it is not necessary for the learner to know what rules they are learning, but it was necessary for them to correctly repeat, transform and perform other manipulations on the sentences orally for them to achieve communicative ability (Livia 2006).

Although the attention to communication and conversation increased strongly with the use of the direct and audio-lingual methods, there was a strong resemblance between these two methods and that of the grammar translation method in that they all focus on drills and accuracy, and the avoidance of errors. In Libyan education, the direct method and the audio-lingual method are rarely used in schools because of the large class sizes and the inadequate teaching aids which are required for different activities. These methods are used by a few schools in the private sector because class sizes are smaller and classes are better equipped.

According to Elabbar (2011), the audio-lingual method is generally used in the English foreign language context in Libya. Elabbar (2011) states that students tend to prefer learning through drilling, memorising and repeating activities practically - such as grammatical lists, long words as well as memorising long reading paragraphs

3.8 The decline of grammar

For many years, the ongoing debate in language teaching has been whether to teach grammar or to disregard it from the teaching curriculum. The acknowledgement of the insufficiencies of the approaches which focused entirely on the presentation and manipulation of the grammatical forms, and the realisation that knowing a language is more than knowing its grammar, such as the grammar translation method and the audio lingual method, led to the focus on meaning and language use in communicative competence and a shift away from an exclusive focus on grammatical form. Communicative based approaches define the aim of language learning as acquiring communicative ability, which means the ability to use and interpret meaning in real life communication. This approach was theoretically motivated by numerous developments in linguistics and sociolinguistics in both Europe and America (Nassaji and Fotos 2004).

3.8.1 Communicative competence

In the 1970s, the importance of sociolinguistics and pragmatics were emphasised in second language teaching, this emphasis led to another approach. Newby (2011) states that from the late 1970s onwards, in the early

days of the communicative approach, 'communicative competence' became the slogan under which various methodological practices, which sought to link pedagogy with language, use in the real world were united. The concept of communicative competence appeared progressively from the work of researchers such as Chomsky (1969), Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1982).

Chomsky (1969) drew the first distinction between the notion of competence (the speaker/hearer's knowledge of his language) and the notion of performance (which means the actual use of the language in concrete situations). Another theory of communicative competence put forward by Hymes (1972) was a very influential theory, which was developed in reaction to Chomsky's characterisation of language competence mainly as linguistic competence. Communicative competence has become a highly topical linguistic term, which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. The notion of communicative competence was developed within the discipline of linguistics. It was described by Hymes (1972) as what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings. Burner (2005) states that grammatical competence was only a part of Hymes's communicative competence, which operated with the notion that what is possible has to do with grammar, whereas appropriateness has to do with cultural and contextual factors. The concept was then extended by Canale and Swain (1980) to include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse (cohesion and coherence) and strategic (communication) competences. In addition, they

believed that grammatical competence should be as important as sociolinguistic competence (Burner 2005).

3.8.2 Communicative language teaching

Communicative language teaching emerged in the 1970's. It was marked as the beginning of "*a major paradigm-shift within language teaching in the twentieth century*" (Richards and Rodgers 2014:81). The failure to produce accuracy and fluency when using the grammar translation method and the audio-lingual method paved the way for the development of communicative language teaching (Sundqvist 2012). British applied linguists emphasised another fundamental dimension of language that was inadequately addressed which were the functional and communicative potential of language. They saw the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than mere mastery of structure. The main aim of this approach was communication; language was considered as a way of conveying meaning, which seems to correspond with the concept of communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Teachers were encouraged to use written texts such as magazines, newspapers, forms or instructions, or to listen to spoken interactions that were used in problem-solving, decision-making, or personal conversations in general.

Communicative language teaching can be divided into two versions: a strong version and a weak version. The strong version is intended to use English to do something practical, whereas the weak version focuses on learning

English for pedagogical purposes. Sullivan (2000) states that much of the literature reflects the theoretical basis of the weak version rather than the strong version of the communicative approach. (Sullivan 2000) points out that the weak version of the communicative approach seems to dominate because the description of the communicative approach emphasises ways that the teacher can develop activities that provide learners with the opportunity to communicate using what students have learned in the second language. However, according to Burns (2009), the communicative approach has a number of disadvantages. The first is that this approach can sometimes result in an unbalanced curriculum where too much emphasis is put on one language skill (speaking) at the expense of other skills. Another disadvantage is that because this approach is learner-centred, it places all responsibility for learning on the learner, which raises the question of what role should be played by the teacher's expertise. Another disadvantage is given by Stern (1992) who argues that CLT has become more successful in ESL (English as a second language) settings, but failed in EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts. In ESL contexts, learners have a real need to use language, and their learning is usually tutored with native English teachers. However, in EFL settings, learners' exposure to language is limited to only classroom instruction, with limited class hours, which means poor language input for learners. Moreover, many difficulties are encountered in such contexts relating to the proficiency of non-native teachers, availability of required materials, crowded classrooms and teacher-dependent learners, which is the case in the Libyan educational system in general, and particularly in English being taught as a foreign language.

However, although the communicative approach received wide recognition, it obviously does have its weaknesses. Richards and Rodgers (2014) agree that although the communicative approach has become widely used for the design of teaching materials and language courses, it is not without its critics. Richards and Rodgers (2014: 103) claim that criticism of communicative language teaching take several different forms, which include:

1. Communicative language teaching promotes fossilisation, which results in students with good communication skills but a poor command of grammar where students often develop fluency at the expense of accuracy.
2. It is not applicable in different cultures of learning.
3. It reflects a western-based top down approach to innovation, which does not capture the diversity of the students' needs and goals.

The use of the communicative approach is quite limited and quite unsuccessful in private Libyan schools and universities although it has been proposed in many curricula, books and texts. The large number of students, the time constraints and shortage of facilities make this approach difficult to apply. Another aspect, which adds to the difficulty of applying a communicative approach to the Libyan context, is the limited training of many Libyan lecturers who apply such an approach, which is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred. Another very important factor creating difficulty in applying the communicative approach is that it conflicts with so many features

of the educational context in Libya. Poor English skills on the part of teachers as well as inadequate teacher preparation make it very difficult, if not impossible for many teachers to implement CLT in their classrooms.

Orafi and Borg (2009) conducted a study on three teachers' implementation of a new communicative English language curriculum in Libyan secondary schools. The teachers were observed for two weeks teaching a unit of material from the given curriculum and then interviewed to examine the rationales for their classroom practices. Orafi and Borg (2009) reported that the new curriculum made demands on not only teachers' pedagogical expertise but it also challenged their own communicative ability in English. English language teachers in Libya typically graduate from university with undeveloped spoken communication skills in English. Moreover, Sawani (2009) pointed out that applying such an approach would not be easy in the Libyan teaching and learning context due to various factors:

1. Most teachers of EFL use silent methods such as the Grammar Translation Method.
2. Poor teacher training programs do not support/inform teachers with the latest techniques and theories of EFL teaching.
3. Teachers' overall proficiencies tend to be low.
4. The use of such an approach in the Libyan EFL context is

Influenced by several factors, which might be complicated for teachers and even students of EFL. Although research conducted by Orafi and Borg (2009) and Sawani (2009) in the Libyan context display the difficulty of applying the

communicative approach in such settings, it is very important to encourage and make use of some of the activities the communicative approach proposes.

3.8.3 The natural approach

The natural approach was introduced in 1977 by Tracy Terrell, a teacher of Spanish in California, who presented a proposal for a new philosophy of language teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2014). This approach, which emphasised exposure or input rather than practice, emerged from Terrell's experiences of teaching Spanish. Terrell (1977) used the adjective "natural" in naming this approach indicating that most of the support for the suggestions made for the emergence of this approach stem from observations and studies of second language acquisition in natural, i.e., non-academic, contexts.

Terrell collaborated with Krashen in order to explain a theoretical justification for the natural approach, making use of Krashen's findings concerning second language acquisition (Richards and Rodgers 2014). According to the natural approach, communication is the key function of language. Because this approach focuses on teaching communicative abilities, Krashen and Terrell (1983) referred to it as an example of the communicative approach.

Similarly, Zimmerman (1997) argues that the natural approach is similar to other communicative approaches being developed during this period. The natural approach is founded on its own set of hypotheses, designed primarily

to "*enable a beginning student to reach acceptable levels of oral communicative ability in the language classroom*" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983:131). The natural approach is based on a theoretical model consisting of five hypotheses. These five hypotheses are based on Krashen's (1982:7) second language acquisition theory, which he viewed as "*a part of theoretical linguistics, i.e. it can be studied and developed without regard to practical application.*"

(1) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis:

(The distinction between "natural" acquisition as seen in LI and the formal learning that emphasises conscious rules and error correction). This hypothesis claims that there are two distinctive ways to develop competence in a second or a foreign language. Acquisition (the natural way) refers to an unconscious process that involves the naturalistic development of language proficiency through understanding and using language for meaningful communication. Learning refers to a process in which conscious rules of language are developed. Learning results in explicit knowledge about the forms of language. According to this hypothesis learning cannot lead to acquisition (Richards and Rodgers 2014).

(2) The Monitor Hypothesis:

Conscious learning has the limited function of "monitoring" or editing language performance. It claims that learned knowledge may be called upon in order to correct mistakes committed in communication. This is the only function of learned knowledge.

(3) The Natural Order Hypothesis:

Grammatical structures are naturally acquired in a somewhat predictable order without artificial sequencing of input. According to Krashen (1982), research shows that certain grammatical structures are acquired before others naturally in first language acquisition, which is no different from second language acquisition. Krashen (1982) considers errors as signs of naturalistic developmental processes during acquisition.

(4) The Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis claims to explain the relationship between the language a learner is exposed to (input) and language acquisition. According to the input hypothesis, language is acquired when input is in an interesting and relevant context that is slightly above the learners' current level of competence. Richards and Rodgers (2014) conclude that this hypothesis involves four main issues:

1. The hypothesis relates to acquisition not learning

2. Learners acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly higher than their current level of competence.
3. The ability to speak fluently cannot be taught directly but it emerges in time after the acquirer has gained linguistic competence by understanding input
4. Comprehensible input refers to utterances that the learner understands based on the context in which they are used as well as the language in which they are used. When the speaker uses language, the acquirer understands the message.

(5) The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen (1982) considers that attitudinal factors are related to language acquisition; acquirers with a "low affective filter" - an optimal attitude - will be more receptive and more likely to interact with confidence. Natural approach methodology emphasises comprehensible and meaningful input rather than grammatically correct production.

Although the natural approach attracted a great deal of interest in the 1980's, numerous articles and full length books have been devoted to rejecting and criticising both the theory and research, Krashen (1982) used in support of the principles of the natural approach, in addition to its practical applications. However, the natural approach still has its advocates (Richards and Rodgers 2014).

With the rise of the communicative approach, the centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, since it was argued that language ability involved much more than grammatical competence. This questioning of the centrality of grammar caused the debate among many scholars over the importance of grammar. It started with different views held by two opposing camps concerning whether or not the teaching of grammar is beneficial to second language teaching and learning. Some researchers believed that formal instruction could facilitate acquisition in some way while others considered exposure to appropriate language input to be most essential. An increase of interest in first language acquisition took place, and the belief arose that the psychological processes underlying first language acquisition could be applied to second language acquisition if suitable learning environments and conditions were provided (Newby 2000). The best-known proponent of this view was Krashen (1981) with his theory of language acquisition, which emphasises the importance of the learners' exposure to the language.

Terrell (1991) states that the dislike of a heavy focus on grammar in the classroom is partly due to the influence of Krashen's "monitor" hypothesis on language instructors. This hypothesis posits that the role of explicit grammar knowledge is limited to that of a "monitor," or editor, which some speakers are able to use in writing or prepared speech, but which is not very useful in ordinary conversation. The main aim of these hypotheses was to prove the ineffectiveness of grammar (Töllinen, 2002).

Various positions on the place of grammar and the type of grammar that should be taught have been taken within communicative language teaching approaches. Some authors (Krashen and Terrell 1983, Hammond 1988) have advocated a totally natural approach and argue that this allows acquisition to develop gradually. Krashen (1983) for example, stressed that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drills. Krashen (1983) argues that acquisition would be bound to occur if learners were exposed to meaningful interactions where their focus was not on the form of the interaction but on the messages, they were exchanging.

According to Stern (1992), those against grammar instruction have argued that teaching grammar has no effect on L2 learners' competence. This position is represented by Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, which claims that as long as L2 learners are provided with comprehensible input in a condition of low affective filter, they will acquire the target language.

Krashen (2002), states that the learning process should be natural. He contests the idea held during the time of the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, which assumed that the only way of developing grammatical competence in a second language was through direct teaching of grammar. Krashen (2002:1) states that most teachers and researchers at that time held the "skill-building" position which states that "*learners learn language by first learning the rules consciously, then practicing them in output exercises, and*

[learners] fine tune [their] knowledge of rules by getting their errors corrected."

Krashen (2002) believes that explicit grammar teaching is not a good idea since conscious learning of grammatical structures is considered to affect learners' production in the L2. Indeed, he explains that conscious knowledge of grammar has a limited function. Learners can use it only to edit or monitor their second language production. For Krashen (2002), there is another way to develop competence in a second language. L2 learners acquire the grammatical rules of a language by understanding input containing these rules. The attention is not on consciously learning the rules but on understanding the message.

The evidence for the "comprehension" or "input" hypothesis is supported by studies showing that students in comprehension-based second language classes constantly outperform those in traditional classes, at both the beginning and intermediate levels. Other studies have shown the powerful impact of recreational reading (Krashen, 2003). There is also strong indirect evidence supporting the comprehension hypothesis. The grammatical system of any language is too complicated to be consciously learned, and many people develop high levels of competence without formal instruction. Furthermore, Terrell (1991:54), in her review on the role of grammar instruction, asserts that "*the ability to demonstrate grammatical knowledge on a discrete-point grammar exam does not guarantee the ability to use that knowledge in ordinary conversation, be it spontaneous or monitored*". Furthermore, Weaver (1996) argues that grammar teaching is not helpful in the sense that no matter how students are taught grammatical concepts and

language conventions, they will not automatically make use of these in writing. Norris and Ortega (2000), who conducted an extensive review of literature on second language instruction, where a meta-analysis, which is a statistical procedure that enables researchers to compare the relative effectiveness of two types of instruction, was conducted on 49 studies on the effectiveness of L2 instruction. It concluded that a focus on meaning alone is not sufficient for learning. Instruction that leads to effective language learning includes a focus on grammar.

3.9 The revival of grammar

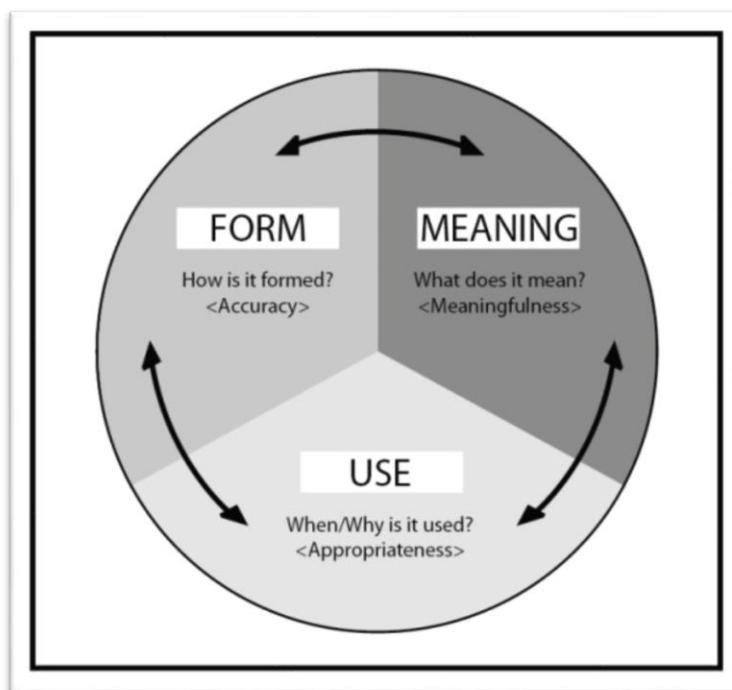
After the abandoning of grammar, the idea that the communicative approach would help learners develop both their communicative and their linguistic competence did not show much effect (Nassaji and Fotos 2004). A less extreme position was taken against grammar which was adopted by Long (2002) Recent research has revealed the need for formal instruction. A grammar revival has been highlighted by the emergence of two influential theoretical concepts: noticing and consciousness raising.

3.9.1 Integrating grammar in a communicative approach

A key question that arises from the argument that teaching grammar is necessary for effective language learning is whether teachers should teach grammar separately or integrate it into classroom tasks and texts (Burns *et al.* 2011). Grammar is considered by Brown (1997), as a system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. While

Larsen-Freeman (1989 :04) states that “*grammar is not merely a collection of forms but rather involves the three dimensions of what linguists refer to as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics*”. In other words, if students know a grammatical form, they should understand the structure, rule, and usage of the form in communication.

Figure 1: the Three Dimensions of Teaching Grammar



Source: Larsen Freeman 1989)

Similarly, Savignon (1991) maintains that learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences. For this reason, grammar and communication are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent. Brown (1997:349) also agrees with the indispensable role of grammar in communicative language teaching and he presents principles of integrating grammar and communication. Grammar should be “*embedded in meaningful and communicative context*” and it should meet students’

communicative goals. In addition, teachers should not overwhelm students with linguistic terminology but rather help them improve both fluency and accuracy. Nassaji and Fotos (2004) state that if the goal of second language learning is the development of communicative competence enabling learners to use language for communicative purposes, then grammar and communication must be integrated.

Azar (2008) argues that the term “communicative language teaching” was more or less designated by those involved in the naturalist movement which implied that being involved in communicative language teaching, meant not being able to engage in explicit grammar teaching. However, Azar (2008) maintains that this view is not true and never has been. She states that grammar teaching can be integrated into a communicative framework or skill-based curriculum and likewise communicative methods and materials can be integrated into grammar-based teaching. From Azar (2008)’s perspective, communicative teaching and grammar teaching are not mutually exclusive, they are mutually supportive. Azar (2008:03) states, “*They fit hand in glove, they are a hybrid that works.*”

In this respect, Leech (1994:19) maintains that communicative grammar is “*an approach to grammar in which the goal is to explore and formulate the relations between the formal event of grammar (words, phrases, sentences and their categories and structures) and the conditions of their meaning and use.*” Similar to Larsen-Freeman (1989) in Leech’s (1994) definition of a

communicative grammar, he is promoting the importance of connecting morphology, syntax, pragmatics and semantics.

Halliday (1985, cited in Nunan 1998:102) argues, “*As teachers, we need to help learners see that effective communication involves achieving harmony between functional interpretation and formal appropriacy.*” Nunan (1998) points out that this harmony occurs by giving the learners tasks that dramatize the relationship between grammatical items and the discourse contexts in which they occur.

However, many studies also promote the effectiveness of the separate teaching of grammar. Ellis (2002) argues that grammar should be taught separately without any effort to integrate it to the task-based component. The reason for such a claim is to prevent unnecessary interruptions during communication. Spada and Lightbown (2008) further elaborate that isolated focus on form instruction is most beneficial to second language learners when the interference of the L1 is the strongest, for linguistic items that are relatively simple but not salient linguistic items in oral production, and for linguistic items that are less frequent.

3.9.2 Focus on-form and focus-on-forms

One of the concerns of applied linguistics was centred on the most effective form of grammar instruction implemented within a communicative approach

(Sheen 2002). The notion of focus on form was first put forth by Long (1991:45) who defined it as *"an instruction that draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication"*. Long (1991) acknowledged the need to teach form in the language classroom, and suggested that it should be merged into meaning-based activities. Following Long (1991), Ellis *et al.* (2001) drew a distinction between the traditional focus-on-forms approach and the new focus-on-form instruction, arguing the need to teach grammar in a communicative way.

Ellis *et al.* (2001) specify that the focus-on-forms approach is concerned with teaching pre-selected grammatical rules, whereas a focus-on-form deals with grammatical forms in a meaning-based communicative task. Ellis *et al.* (2001) indicate that the purpose of focus-on-form instruction is to help learners build their communication. According to Ellis *et al.*, (2001: 411) this *"can be achieved through attention to form when learners are performing a communicative task."*

Another approach, which is not very different from focus on form is one put forward by Azar (2007) known as grammar based teaching. Azar (2007) indicates that grammar based teaching uses grammar as the base, the starting point and foundation, for developing all language skills speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Information about English grammar complemented by many and diverse practice opportunities are also provided in grammar-based teaching. Azar (2007a) indicates that both grammar based teaching and focus

on form merge grammar and communicative teaching together, but the difference between them is that they tackle the integration of grammar into a curriculum differently. Azar (2007a) clarifies this by maintaining that a focus on form seeks to integrate a grammar component into a communicative language-teaching curriculum. Grammar based teaching (GBT) seeks to integrate communicative language teaching into a structural syllabus, usually in one class (often called a grammar class) within a larger, varied curriculum. Azar (2007a) clarifies her point by specifying that, the issues facing practitioners today are whether:

1. To teach grammar separately but integrated with CLT methods and materials as one component out of many in a well-balanced program of second language instruction.
2. To integrate grammar into a content- and/or task-focused approach, either incidentally as opportunities arise (reactively) or by a predetermined grammar syllabus (proactively).

Azar (2007a) indicates that focus on form certainly has a place in second language teaching and so does Grammar based teaching (GBT). She states that the variables are many as to which approach is best suited to the students. From Azar's (2007a) point of view, teachers need to take into consideration the course purposes and the best use of available teaching time. They also need to consider the students' learning preferences, educational and grammar backgrounds, skill level, and academic or work goals. Azar (2007a:11) maintains,

“Large numbers of practitioners and academics can currently be seen to be in accord that a focus on grammar plays a

positive role in second language instruction and that GBT and CLT are mutually supportive, not mutually exclusive. To return to my starting point in this article, when it comes to grammar teaching and communicative teaching, my answer is simply, Do both”

3.9.3 Error correction

Errors are a natural result of learning which are important to both the teacher and the learner. Errors show the teachers where the learner stands and pushes them to find suitable strategies for future teaching improvement. Simultaneously, by being corrected, the learner could reach language competence.

Errors and mistakes do not denote the same thing. Corder (1967) attempts to differentiate between the two, by suggesting that errors are caused by poor knowledge, whereas mistakes occur as a result of inability to use knowledge in producing the language. Corder (1967:167) claims, *“Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning”*.

Another similar distinction is made by Ellis (1997) and Hedge (2000), who distinguished between two different types of errors that may determine the appropriateness of correction. They are global errors and local errors. Global errors are the ones that negatively affect the whole sentence structure and cause unclear communication, while local errors are the ones that affect only one part of the sentence and do not hinder comprehension. This distinction sheds light on the nature of the error that has to be corrected. Proponents of the communicative approach believe that prominence should be placed on

correcting errors that obstruct comprehension (i.e. global errors) rather than all errors (Ur, 1999). Conversely, the teachers surveyed in Thu's (2009) study believed that correcting students' errors is essential irrespective of whether these errors affect comprehensibility negatively or not; but rationally, neither time nor students' psychology allows correction of all errors.

Ellis (1996: 22) stated that, "*errors, according to behaviourist theory, were the result of non-learning rather than wrong learning*". This means behaviourists look at errors as a negative issue, which should be avoided. With the emergence of the communicative approach in the early 70s, questions were asked about the suitability of the behaviourists' methods in correcting errors. Scholars like Krashen (1985), Terrell (1977), and Hammond (1988) argued against focus on form, and suggested that error correction may actually do more harm than good. Hammond argued that error correction had no value in speeding up the acquisition of the L2. While others suggest that it can actually increase students' "affective filter," which is one of Krashen's hypotheses, meaning that students' anxiety levels increase, making it more difficult for them to study the language. The more recent communicative language teaching approaches which minimize the importance of form focused instruction and explicit error correction are believed by some researchers to be inadequate (Celce-Murcia *et al.* 1997)

To sum up, concerning teaching grammar, error correction is very important in EFL contexts. Although research conducted by Lochman (2002) maintained

that a focus on form in learning a second language is needed and that teachers should not use direct error correction, as this encourages students to feel more confident when they speak. A study conducted by Pazaver and Wang (2009: 28), argued that “several studies carried out in foreign language situations do seem to indicate that students find error correction and grammar instruction helpful in language learning”.

3.9.4 Task based language teaching (TBLT)

Another approach, which is considered by some of its proponents, as a logical development of the communicative approach is the Task, based language-teaching approach (TBLT) (Richards and Rodgers 2014). As pointed out by Nunan (2004) the difference between communicative language teaching and task based language teaching is that the former is a broad philosophical approach which is a summary of theory and research in linguistics, psychology and sociology, whereas TBLT is a realisation of communicative language teaching at the level of syllabus design and methodology. TBLT promotes the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Van den Branden (2006:01) defines it as “*an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning and to use language for real-world non-linguistic purposes*”.

Richards and Rogers (2014) maintain that in TBLT teachers need to adopt new roles in the classroom, which may require special training and ongoing support. Ellis (2009) states that TBLT is based on the principle that language learning will develop more successfully if the purpose of teaching was simply

to create contexts in which the learner's natural language learning capacity can be nurtured instead of making a systematic effort to teach the language step by step as the case is in structural approaches. Such a principle has led to the criticism of this approach by those who advocate a more traditional approach to teaching (Sheen 1994, Swan 2005, Widdowson 1992). These criticisms were then challenged by Ellis (2009) who sees them as based on a fundamental misunderstanding of what a 'task' is, and of the theoretical rationales that inform task-based teaching. These criticisms also reflect a failure to acknowledge that multiple versions of task-based teaching exist. In particular, Ellis (2009) indicates that task-based teaching should not be considered as an alternative to more traditional, form-focused approaches but could be used alongside them.

Although this approach received high recognition in the teaching and learning field, it is quite difficult to apply in contexts where class sizes are large and teachers lack training in applying this and similar approaches.

3.9.5 The lexical approach

Another approach which downplayed the role of grammar comes from the supporters of a Lexical Approach in which the focus of teaching is shifted from grammar to chunks of language (Baigent 1999). A lexical approach in language teaching refers to one, which is derived from the belief that the building blocks of language learning are not grammar, but words and especially multi word combinations such as collocations, idioms and fixed phrases (Richards and Rogers 2014). Proponents of the Lexical Approach

argue that people can learn a second language better if they are taught lexical chunks as whole units instead of receiving grammatical explanations or learning how to analyse sentences. Richards and Rogers (2014) indicate that the goal of a lexical approach is to develop learners' awareness and use of lexical chunks as an important feature of naturalistic language use. Moreover, learners should develop strategies for identifying and learning the chunks that they encounter in spoken and written texts.

Attempts at combining lexical chunks into ELT were made by Lewis (1993, 1997) who introduced the *lexical approach*. Lewis (1997) considers, chunks of language as ranging from individual words to, in some cases, full sentences which are independent lexical units conveying fixed meanings. According to Lewis (1993), language should be recognised as grammaticalized lexis instead of lexicalised grammar, consequently giving more importance to the behaviour of words and word patterns in language production and understanding. He argues the teaching of 'chunks', groups of words, which frequently occur together, permits more class time than the teaching of grammar. Lewis (1993) rejected the Chomskyan models of language because it was mainly concerned with the production of well-formed sentences. In conjunction with Lewis's (1997) theory of language, Lewis (1997) also offered a theory of learning. This theory was greatly influenced by Krashen and Terrell's (1983) natural approach in the framework of which authentic spoken and written input constitute the basis for L2 acquisition. Therefore, Lewis supported providing learners with high volumes of comprehensible input and allowing students to observe, instead of produce, the target forms. Moreover, Lewis emphasised

the need for input-centred consciousness-raising activities, which allow students to 'notice' (Schmidt 1990) chunks and lead to transforming input (which language learners encounter) into intake (i.e. language that is internalised). The Collins Cobuild English course (Willis and Willis 1989) was an attempt made by Willis and his wife to develop a syllabus based on lexical rather than grammatical principles.

Like all other approaches, this approach has been subject to criticism. Richards and Rogers (2014) states that although lexis in language teaching has been enhanced by development in lexical and linguistic theory, and by recognition of the role of lexical chunks in language learning and communication, lexis still only represents one component of communicative competence. Richards and Rogers (2014) point out that Lewis and others have coined the term lexical approach in order to characterise their proposals for a lexis-based approach. However, their proposals lack a full characterisation of an approach or method. Richards and Rogers (2014) elaborate that since Lewis's original proposal for a lexical approach and a lexically based syllabus, which are alternatives to a traditional syllabus and models, the concept, has not been further developed in order to explain how linguistic competence could only develop through the grammaticalization of lexis. However, Richards and Rogers (2014:225) state

"It remains to be convincingly demonstrated how a lexically based theory of language and language learning can be applied at the levels of design and procedure in language teaching suggesting that it is still an idea in search of an approach and a methodology".

Pointing out that the lexical approach may be merged with other approaches such as the communicative approach, for it to be more effective.

3.9.6 Weaknesses of approaches and methods used in teaching grammar

Based on the conclusions drawn from previous broad literature conducted by this study and the researcher's own experience in teaching English language grammar, over the years, many approaches have emerged and developed. Some including grammar instruction while others excluding it. However, the implementation of these approaches and methods in different contexts is not always an easy task especially in the Libyan context. Most approaches assume long-standing and stable learning environments. They ignore the influence of political and cultural factors. Moreover, most of these approaches are not suitable for the Libyan University educational situation, which is characterised by overcrowded classes and lack of teaching resources. Furthermore, many approaches suggest one size fits all and are management driven not by grammar experts or lecturers. Many of the proposed models are prescriptive and too abstract lacking practical implications. Although many of these approaches are beneficial in teaching and learning English grammar, they are quite difficult to implement in the Libyan context.

3.10 Choosing an approach or method for teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014) approaches and methods prescribe how teachers should teach. While some methods and approaches mentioned earlier in the literature review became widely accepted and practiced, others may have caught less attention and have not been widely adopted due to the difficulty of understanding and using them. Moreover, they may also lack clear practical application, require special training and call for major changes in teachers' beliefs and practices (Richards and Rodgers 2014). The learning of grammar is a complex, multidimensional and lengthy process and no single pedagogical approach can claim priority in teaching (Ellis and Shintani, 2014).

The view of the relationship between teachers and methods puts greater emphasis on the teachers' ability to become creative and individual. It also gives the method a supporting role rather than a controlling one. Richards and Rodgers (2014: 350) indicate, "*A more flexible way of considering approaches and methods is to see them as a resource that can be tailored to the teacher's needs.*" In this respect, the method is viewed as principles and procedures, which can be adopted and modified according to the context it is going to be used in. From this perspective, Richards and Rodgers (2014) specify when methods are adopted in a teachers' local context, the adoptions made, reflect the teachers' understanding, beliefs and teaching styles. Richards and Rodgers (2014) also add that the adjustments could be made due to local factors such as class size, classroom resources, learners' proficiency level and their learning styles. From their point of view, the role of the teacher is to align

the methods to their classroom and educational context, which will create a better fit between the method and its context of use.

Having discussed the place of grammar in language teaching and whether it should be taught or learned. It is also very important to consider how language teachers see the place of grammar and its role in their own teaching practice. The part of this chapter investigates the importance of teacher's and learners' beliefs, and how they affect the teaching of grammar. It will also review several studies on teachers' and learners' beliefs about grammar.

3.11 Teachers and learners' beliefs about grammar

While communicative teaching has occupied much of the current research, the role of implicit and explicit grammar instruction remains unresolved as evident in the works of Celce-Murcia, (1991); Ebsworth and Schweers, (1997); Ellis, (2006), and Freeman (2014). Accordingly, it is worth stating that Ellis (2006), highlights the lack of empirical evidence within SLA research to provide clear answers about what, when and how grammatical items should be taught. However, while making several suggestions for further research, Ellis (2006) does not suggest that language teachers' beliefs about grammar instruction should be investigated, he also does not refer in his review to any work carried out in this areas. Ellis et al., (1997:246) suggest that:

“In light of the lack of theoretical and empirical consensus (regarding explicit grammar instruction) it is crucial that we add

to our understanding the voices of classroom teachers who face this problem on a daily basis and have developed working solutions for the populations they address.”

On the other hand, Burns (2009:15) recommends that *“teachers beliefs about grammar should be a central research avenue: Grammar teaching has not disappeared in the age of CLT. It is more the case that it is slowly coming of age.”* Burns (2009) indicates that in order to find ways of effectively integrating grammar into CLT practice, it is also important that teachers’ beliefs about grammar and the personal and practical knowledge they hold about ways of teaching it, be placed more centrally into the research spotlight.

Nespor (1987:324) points out the absence of clear guidelines about the teaching of grammar, particularly in situations where *“the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled”* and have led teachers to create their own personal theories about how to approach grammar in the language classroom. These personal theories are derived from their belief systems

Azar (2007b) expresses her opinion concerning the effect of teachers beliefs have on their teaching practice by stating; *“I think we teachers know when something we do in class works or doesn’t work. We need to trust our own pedagogical observations, trust the validity of our own perceptions.”* Azar (2007b) clarifies that teachers are often their own best guides. She sees that

there is an expertise, which comes from increasing experience in the classroom, which cannot be learned in any other way.

Graus and Coppen (2016) state that although there has been considerable progress in grammar instruction research still has relatively limited pedagogical relevance for teachers. Graus and Coppen (2016) claim that SLA researchers have largely ignored the teacher perspective and a considerable gap still exists between grammar research and teachers' practice. Graus and Coppen (2016) point out that student teachers have to develop their own ideas and beliefs about grammar teaching on which to base their practice. All The above views seem to provide conflicting views about the practical implications of research conducted on English grammar.

Moreover, numerous studies have indicated that students' attitudes are very important in order to have successful language learning. In addition, studies on students' and teachers' perceptions have revealed major contradictions between the beliefs and attitudes of students and teachers, which can be detrimental to language learning and teaching. Furthermore, teacher cognition has been acknowledged as fundamental in second language teaching. Indeed, teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about grammar instruction and how languages are learned and taught are crucial to understand why they teach the way they do.

3.11.1 Teacher cognition

Teacher cognition is a broad concept. Borg (2003: 81) states that it is *“the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching what teachers know, believe, and think”*. Precisely, it refers to how information is stored in the mind as knowledge, what knowledge is, and how that knowledge is used. In addition, cognition includes the mental information processing which impacts on behaviour. It is considered as an umbrella term, which includes the store of beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, theories, and attitudes about all aspects of their work which teachers hold and which have a powerful impact on teachers' classroom practices (Borg, 1998). One of the areas, which have been greatly affected and influenced by teachers' beliefs, is grammar and how much importance is attached to it and whether it should be taught in ELT courses. Understanding teachers' beliefs is important in development and implementation of new programmes and effective teaching. According to Borg (2003) there have been several studies on the subject of teachers' beliefs in recent years. They underline the importance of teachers' beliefs and the effects they have on teaching the English language. Borg (2006) reviewed Sixty-four studies of language cognition and grammar instruction. Five categories of study were identified in his review: previous experience, teacher education, classroom practice, literacy instruction and teaching grammar. The majority of these studies reviewed by Borg (2006) took place in Europe, the UK, or North America and they were mostly conducted in contexts where English is a second language rather than a foreign language.

3.10.2 Knowledge and beliefs

Research on teachers' beliefs and the relationship of those beliefs with pedagogical practice, originated in America in the early 1970s. Alexander et al (1991:317) define teachers' knowledge as *an individual's personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, and memories*" which are related to the practice and profession of teaching, In other words, anything the individual holds that helps him or her fulfil the role of teacher. Teacher knowledge is the total knowledge that a teacher has at his or her disposal at a particular moment, which, by definition, underlies his or her actions.

This does not imply that all the knowledge a teacher has actually plays a role in his or her actions. Teachers can, consciously or unconsciously, refrain from using certain insights during their teaching. Pajares (1992) pointed out that a confusion researchers have in defining the term 'beliefs' is the distinction between beliefs and knowledge; some argue that they are the same, whereas others perceive that they are different. Pajares (1992:313) concluded that a distinction used commonly in most definitions is that *"Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact"*.

It is also important to know the attitudes and opinions of students and teachers towards the role that grammar instruction plays in second language learning and teaching. According to Kern (1995), language learners are not always conscious of their own learning style but they hold, especially older learners, strong beliefs about how they should learn a language. Johnson (1994)

suggests that teacher beliefs are neither easy to define nor study because they are not directly observable. Some researchers (Borg 2003, Orafi and Borg 2009, Borg and Burns 2008) have explored the teaching of grammar from the perspective of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, theories, and perceptions. They provided fresh views and interest in grammar. Farrell (2015) indicates that these beliefs are usually based on the way they have been taught a language and the assumption that a particular type of instruction works best for them.

3.11.2 Learners' beliefs

Understanding learner beliefs about language learning is important in order to understand learner strategies and plan appropriate language instruction (Horwitz 1999). Learner beliefs have been identified as an important individual difference variable in second language (L2) learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Numerous educators and researchers have pointed out that student beliefs play a significant role in motivation, selection of learning strategies and learning in general. Therefore, foreign language educators should keep these beliefs and perceptions in mind when planning classroom activities with the assumption that teaching activities need to be comprehended by the learners in order for it to be successful (Schultz: 2001). As EFL teachers understand more about students' attitudes and perceptions, they are in a better position to prepare and implement an EFL curriculum and to adopt appropriate teaching approaches (Feng 2013)

According to Horwitz (1999: 283), “*student beliefs about language learning would seem to have obvious relevance to...success in and satisfaction with their language classes but have remained relatively unexplored*”. These pre-existing beliefs are claimed to have significant impacts on learners’ approaches and behaviours in the learning process. Studies concerning teachers’ beliefs which focus on specific language components have generally dealt with grammar (Simon and Taverniers 2011). The extent to which grammar instruction should be included in foreign language teaching and how it should be taught is a matter of continued debate among researchers and lecturers, but only recently, studies have emerged which aimed to obtain insight into this topic by examining learners’ beliefs about grammar instruction. Polat (2009) states that a substantial body of research in foreign language education has reported that learner beliefs about language learning could also play a vital role in affecting decision-making throughout the learning process. Polat (2009) indicates that there has not been a thorough investigation of the relationship between teacher and student beliefs regarding specific language skills and success in L2 attainment. Nor has there been enough research on how teacher and student beliefs translate into actual classroom practices, despite the current research. Learner beliefs, which have been described by Wenden (1999) as learners’ metacognitive knowledge about learning, have received less attention than teacher beliefs. The next section will look into studies regarding learners and teachers’ beliefs about grammar.

3.12 Studies on teachers and learners' beliefs about teaching grammar

There have been a number of studies on teachers' beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching. Ng and Farrell (2003) investigated the extent to which teachers' theoretical beliefs influenced their classroom grammatical practices. They found evidence to suggest that what teachers say and do in the classroom are governed by their beliefs. Some researchers have explored the teaching of grammar from the perspective of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, attitude, theories and perceptions.

Many empirical studies have focused on examining teachers' and learners' perceptions and beliefs about the importance of grammar. Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) conducted a study on 60 university ESL teachers from New York and Puerto Rico when they distributed questionnaires and conducted eight interviews, in order to examine the participants' views about formal grammar instruction. Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) found that the majority of the Puerto Rican teachers promoted explicit teaching of grammar. However, while the majority of the teachers felt that grammar should be taught, the Puerto Rico teachers seemed more in favour of deductive grammar instruction than the New York teachers did. One teacher in the Puerto Rico group indicated, *"Grammar has always been part of our language learning experience. We see no reason to abandon it totally"* (Ebsworth and Schweers, 1997: 247). Another interesting finding mentioned in this study is how the teachers justified their beliefs about the importance of grammar teaching. The teachers commented that what strongly influences their views is their experiences as teachers and learners.

Borg (2003) reported a study, which was conducted by Chandler (1998) concerning English teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching within the context of the UK National Curriculum. Chandler reported that although 84% of the teachers taught some grammar, many of them said their own language learning experiences at school were their main source of grammatical knowledge. Chandler's (1998 cited in Borg 2003) findings revealed an outdated practice in grammar teaching and a lack of awareness of the role of language understanding in aspects of their work.

Moreover, the studies on students' and teachers' perceptions have revealed major differences between the beliefs and attitudes of students and teachers, which can be detrimental to language learning and teaching. Schulz (1996) conducted an explanatory study to compare their attitudes toward the role of explicit grammar study and error correction in foreign language learning. Questionnaires were administered to 824 foreign language students and 92 instructors at the University of Arizona. The students were found to have more favourable attitudes toward formal study of grammar than the teachers. Unlike the teachers, more students agreed that their communicative ability can be improved more quickly if they study and practice grammar, whereas most teachers believed that it is more important to practice a foreign language in situations simulating real-life than to analyse and practice grammatical patterns. Schulz (1996) also found that the majority of students and teachers think that studying grammar helps in language learning. The results of her study also revealed that that while students in the study had favourable

attitudes towards grammar instruction, most of them do not want to have more grammar in their course. Schulz (1986) concluded that there were large differences between students and teachers in terms of perceptions of the role of grammar and error correction in foreign language learning. Schulz (2001) also conducted another study, where she surveyed 607 Colombian foreign language students and 122 teachers to gauge their perceptions on the role of grammar and error correction in foreign language learning. The collected data were then compared with the data of Schulz's (1996) previous study. Schulz (2001) found that there was comparatively high agreement between students and teachers across cultures on the majority of the questions. The results also specified that there were evident incongruities between student and teacher beliefs within each culture and across cultures. Schulz (2001) proposed that teachers should explore their students' perceptions so that the potential conflicts between student beliefs and instructional practices could be relieved.

Richards *et al.* (2001) conducted an investigation on teachers' most important beliefs about language teaching and learning. The findings of the study indicated that the most reported core belief was centred on the role of grammar in language teaching and the related issue of how grammar should be taught. Out of 38 responses, 25 discussed the importance of grammar for communication and comprehension. The respondents reported that they believed grammar was central to language learning and many, but not all, suggested that direct grammar teaching would result in more accurate language use.

A survey was conducted by (Burgess and Etherington 2002) who tried to identify the attitudes of 48 teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) about grammar and grammar teaching in British universities. The findings showed that these teachers considered grammar important for their learners, and they preferred discourse-based approaches, rather than decontextualized presentation of grammar items, with an inclination towards the use of authentic, full texts and real-life tasks for practice. Burgess and Etherington (2002) claim that the use of texts, rather than isolate structures to introduce grammatical features, suggests a tendency for these teachers to adopt an approach based on focus on form principles. However, the emphasis placed by the British teachers on the systematic practice of grammatical features and the correction of errors suggests that there is also clear attention to the explicit and detailed treatment of forms rather than strict adherence to essential principles of focus on form.

Borg and Burns (2008) administered questionnaires electronically to 176 English language teachers from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Asia in order to explore their beliefs about teaching grammar to adult learners and about integration of grammar into their work. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers expressed strong views about the need to avoid teaching grammar in isolation from their point of view there should be at least some integration. Just a little over half of the teachers who called for the integration of grammar stated that there should be full integration of grammar with the other skills.

Another survey was conducted by Barnard and Scampton (2008) who adapted (Burgess and Etherington 2002)'s questionnaire. They surveyed 32 EAP teachers in New Zealand. Comparable to the British teachers in (Burgess and Etherington 2002), those in New Zealand favoured the treatment of grammatical features in complete texts, rather than in isolation. The New Zealand EAP teachers rejected a strictly form-focussed strategy with a pre-determined grammatical syllabus and preferred to deal with grammatical issues as they arose. Corresponding to the British participants, the New Zealand teachers paid ample attention to extensive practice of grammar and both the teachers and their students thought very highly of the explicit correction of formal errors.

Polat (2009) conducted a study in order to identify possible matches in beliefs between Georgian English language learners and teachers, and the relationships between their beliefs about various aspects of grammar teaching/learning and overall language achievement, in which he used a mixed method research design. The results of his study revealed that the majority of teachers and students in Georgia share a consensus in the significance of the role and importance of grammar in language learning. Polat (2009) also reported that in general, teachers and students shared beliefs in valuing traditional methods of teaching/learning grammar. The findings of Polat's (2009) study also suggested that teachers tended to avoid CLT and content or task-based methods, embracing grammar-based teaching because of performance anxiety and lack of confidence in their L2 proficiency.

Loewen et al. (2009) investigated learners' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. The findings revealed that learners studying English as a second language and those studying English as a foreign language had diverse beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. The findings of his study indicate that the learners favoured explicit instruction over implicit instruction. When the learners were asked to prioritise between communicating in the target language or grammar instruction, the second language learners chose communication over grammar instruction because they were able to practice the language outside the class. However, the foreign language learners preferred grammar instruction over communication because they were unable to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom, and for this reason, the foreign language learners may have placed less value on communication in comparison to grammar instruction.

A similar study was conducted in Turkey by Incecay and Dollar (2011) in which the same questionnaire developed by Loewen et al. (2009) was used to elicit learners' responses to statements about grammar instruction and error correction. The findings revealed learners gave importance to grammar instruction. According to them, studying grammar was useful in not only general language knowledge but also regarding the other language skills.

Phipps and Borg (2009), examined the tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three experienced English teachers of Turkish, British and American nationalities working in a private English-medium university in Turkey. The teachers were observed and interviewed over a period of 18

months. The findings of this qualitative study revealed that all three teachers tended to adopt a focus-on-forms approach, in which they present and practice grammar, correct grammatical errors and use grammatical terminology.

Ezzi (2012) conducted a quantitative study exploring English teachers' beliefs about grammar learning and teaching on 80 teachers of primary and secondary school in Yemen. The findings revealed that the teachers appreciate the importance of grammar as a part of any grammar lesson rather than its importance as the main component of an English course, as a whole. It is revealed that the inductive approach may not be understood well by teachers, as many of the teachers do not make students deduce the rules from the given examples. In addition, many teachers avoid specific strategies even though they think that they are effective.

Assalahi (2013) conducted a qualitative study exploring the relationship between EFL teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and their reported practices in public schools in Saudi Arabia. His findings revealed that despite the mandated communicative language teaching approach and training programmes, teachers reported the dominant use of forms-focused (traditional) grammar instruction (focus on forms). The choice of the use of this method is informed by consistent beliefs and influenced by prevailing contextual factors.

Barrot (2014) sought to investigate the effects of combining isolated and integrated focus on form instruction on developing the speaking and writing skills of ESL Philippine college students. The findings of her study suggest that

combining both isolated and integrated FFI can significantly improve the speaking and writing performances of students.

Spada *et al.* (2014) conducted a study where they compared the effects of two types of form-focused instruction (isolated and integrated) on second language (L2) learning and their contributions to the development of different types of L2 knowledge. The results of this comparative study indicate the complementarity of Isolated and Integrated focus on form in which they both contribute positively to L2 learning given their combined focus on form and meaning.

Table 4: Previous Studies

| Researcher | Date of Research | Country | Method Used | Participants |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| Ebsworth and Schweers | 1997 | New York and Puerto Ricco | Mixed | Teachers |
| Schultz | 1996 | USA | Quantitative | Students and teachers |
| Chandler | 1998 | UK | Quantitative | Teachers |
| Schultz | 2001 | Columbia | Quantitative | Students and teachers |
| Richards et al | 2001 | Asia and Australia | Quantitative | Teachers |
| Burgess and Etherington | 2002 | UK | Quantitative | Teachers |
| Borg and Burns | 2008 | Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Asia | Quantitative | Teachers |
| Barnard and Scampton | 2008 | New Zealand | Quantitative | Teachers |
| Phipps and Borg | 2009 | Turkey | Qualitative | Teachers |
| Polat | 2009 | Tbilisi | Mixed Methods | Teachers and Students |
| Loewen et al | 2009 | Michigan, USA | Quantitative | Students |
| Incecay and Dollar | 2011 | Turkey | Quantitative | Students |
| Ezzi | 2012 | Yemen | Quantitative | Students |
| Assalahi | 2013 | Saudi Arabia | Qualitative | Teachers |
| Barrot | 2014 | Philippine | Qualitative | Students |
| Spada et al | 2014 | Canada | Qualitative | Teachers and Learners |

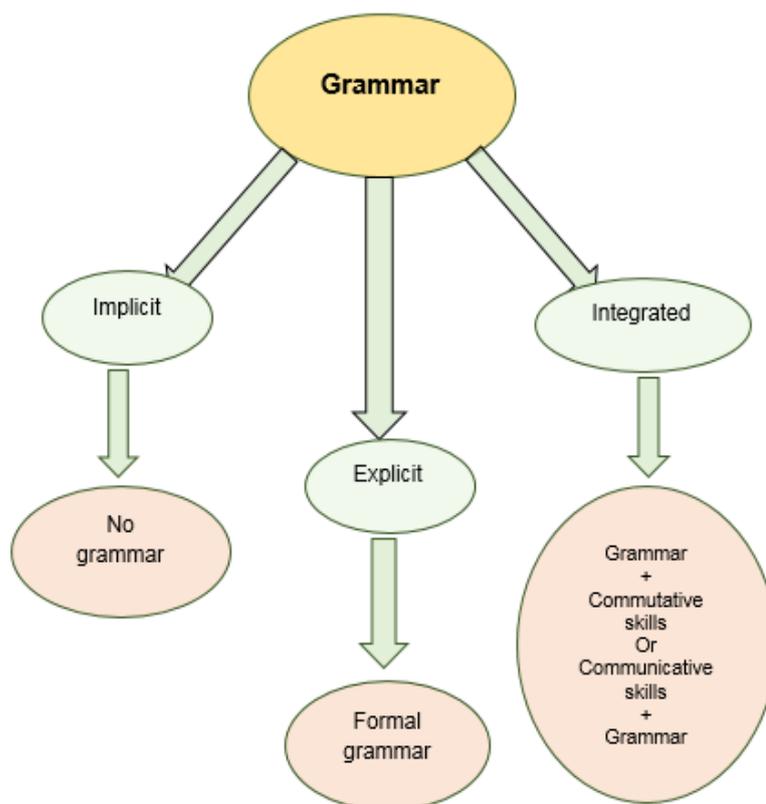
Source: Compiled by the present researcher

As evident from the table above, most of the studies are conducted in Asia, Europe and the United States. The literature lacks practical evidence from countries in which the first language is Arabic, concerning the role of grammar and how it should be taught. Furthermore, not many studies have investigated the teaching of grammar at an academic level especially in the Arab world where much interest is put on teachers of primary and secondary schools. It is also worth mentioning that most of the studies conducted on grammar usually employ either quantitative methods or qualitative methods. Not many studies used mixed methods in order to gain a better understanding of the researched issue and result in findings that are more vigorous. Only two studies from the ones mentioned above used mixed methods. Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) and Polat (2009) conducted these two studies. In line with these two studies, this research will also use mixed methods.

3.13 conceptual framework

Punch, (2009:356) sees a conceptual framework as “*showing the central concept of a piece of research and their conceptual status with respect to each other*”. The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2: conceptual framework



Source: Compiled by the researcher

3.14 Summary and gaps in the literature

Clearly, while communicative language teaching has been viewed as a turning point in second and foreign language teaching, the role of implicit and explicit grammar remains unresolved. The teaching and learning of grammar debate has raised several questions, which remain unanswered. The debated issue on whether to teach grammar or exclude it from teaching still causes a split of opinions. Although many researchers have come to an agreement that some focus on grammar may be effective, a lot of controversy arises on how much grammar should be taught and how should it be taught; should it be isolated or should it be integrated or should

grammar items only be taught when difficulty arises? While the teaching of grammar has been extensively researched, many gaps appear in the literature. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Ellis (2006) reviewed current issues in the teaching of grammar, and pointed to the lack of empirical evidence within SLA research to provide clear answers about what, when and how grammatical items should be taught. Larsen- Freeman (2015) also indicates that there is not a great deal of consensus among researchers on what grammar to teach and what is the best approach to teach it. Larsen- Freeman (2015) explains by stating that while most researchers would recommend some focus on form, in which way this is to be implemented, there is a considerable disagreement. Furthermore, researchers like Ebsworth and Schweers have indicated that considering the lack of theoretical and empirical agreement on the role of explicit grammar instruction, it is essential that an understanding of the views of teachers who encounter this difficulty be investigated. There is broad literature on the place of grammar in teaching English as a foreign language but most of these studies are conducted in non- Arab countries such as the UK, USA and Turkey. Studies dealing with teachers' and learners' beliefs about teaching grammar are more or less absent in Arab countries. Poole (2005:50) points out, that studies on the effectiveness of grammar instruction were mostly conducted in settings, which appear to be well funded, adequately supplied with teaching and learning materials, and generally free of classroom discipline problems. In fact, hardly any empirical studies can be found that took place in a setting in which classes were overcrowded, up-to-date materials were generally not available, and

teachers received less than adequate training in language skills and pedagogy. This present study is conducted in Libya, where the English language has been neglected for many political and economic reasons (UN and US embargo of Libya) and taught using traditional methods of translation and memorisation of rules.

Although a great deal of research has been conducted on teaching English grammar, most of these studies are theoretical and lack empirical data to support their findings. Larsen-Freeman (2015:263) states, "*I argue that not much second language acquisition or applied linguistics research on grammar has made its way into the classroom*". Furthermore, although many studies have been conducted concerning the teaching of grammar, there is no clear, solid evidence that grammar actually enhances communicative skills. It is evident that research into teacher and student beliefs in the Libyan contexts remains limited in terms of both the scope and the geographical coverage. Many of the studies are to some extent, quite descriptive and have been conducted in countries in Europe and Asia. Consequently, the issue of FL teacher and learners' beliefs about grammar and how those beliefs relate to their teaching and learning, remain under-explored. Studies, which gauge the attitudes of teachers and learners, are rare in the Arab world generally, and in Libya specifically. This study will provide empirical data, which will be collected by the use of questionnaires and interviews to measure the beliefs of the students and teachers about the importance of grammar and whether it is teachable or learnable.

Moreover, grammar-teaching theories do not show any evidence of application in Arab countries. In other words, there is little evidence that these theories have practical implications. This study has practical implications based on the results and findings of the collected data, which needs to identify whether grammar-teaching methods suggested by many researchers are applicable in Libya.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology and Methods

4.0 Introduction

Methodology is an essential part of any research. The use of a specific methodology for a research project depends on the scope, purpose and nature of the problem the study wishes to address, as well as the resources available to the researcher. In order for the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study, it is crucial that the right methodology and the right data collection techniques are selected in order for the data to be collected within their available resources. Hence, it is vital that the methodology used in this study is thorough enough to efficiently produce useful data in order for the stated research objectives to be achieved.

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods, starting by determining the philosophy that underpins the methodology used to answer the research questions. Secondly, it discusses and justifies the data collection methods and the design of the instruments, the type and size of the sampling and the administration of the methods as well as a description of how the data analysis methods are presented. The strategies for ensuring the quality of the data are also considered. These include piloting, reliability, validity and generalisability.

For the purpose of this study, the choice of the research method was informed by the theoretical concerns of the study, aims and objectives, as well as the very nature of the research problem. The research methods were selected

based on such factors as ease of data analysis and interpretation, practicability, validity, and available financial resources.

4.1 Revisiting the research questions

This research aims to examine the teaching and learning of grammar to university students at Tripoli University, the Department of English by gauging the views of students and the teachers of grammar. The research questions and objectives are partly formulated from the literature reviewed in the previous section and partly based on concrete evidence, from the researcher's experience at the same institution. For the purpose of this study, it is worth reiterating the research questions and the objectives, which it will achieve:

1. What are the theories, concepts and models of grammar teaching?
2. What are the difficulties facing Libyan students when learning English grammar?
3. What are the students' views regarding the role of grammar in learning English?
4. What are the views and perceptions of the lecturers and learners regarding the learning and teaching of grammar?
5. What grammar methods are best suited to facilitate foreign language learning in the case of Libyan university students?
6. What recommendations can be made to enhance the teaching and learning of grammar at Tripoli University?

4.2 Research objectives

In order to answer the above questions, the current research intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To critically review the literature related to the teaching of grammar.
2. To assess the difficulties and challenges hindering Libyan students when learning English grammar.
3. To explore lecturers' and learners' beliefs, regarding the learning and teaching of grammar.
4. To assess the students' and lecturers' views about the role of grammar in foreign language learning and teaching
5. To describe what methods are best suited to facilitate the learning and teaching of grammar.
6. To make recommendations based on the findings of this study to enhance the teaching of English grammar in Libya.

4.3. The significance of research

Research is an investigation to address a problem. It is defined by Sekaran (2003:03) as "*the process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study and analysis of the situational factors*". Similarly (Bryman 2004) considers research as a systematic approach from which a researcher is able to identify the issues that need to be addressed and decide on the objectives and finally draw conclusions on the basis of the data and its analysis. In addition, Saunders *et al.* (2009) assert that research is a process that is

undertaken to increase knowledge by gathering data in a systematic way. Kumar (2014:381) views research as *“One of the ways of finding answers to your professional and practice questions. It is characterised by the use of tested procedures and methods and an unbiased and objective attitude in the process of exploration”*.

The above definitions appear to overlap in form and content. They seem to lack a clear and comprehensive definition. However, Hussey and Hussey (1997) point out that there is agreement between scholars in the given definitions that “research” uses appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. It is systematic and it addresses a specific issue or a research problem. Kumar (2014) indicates that the definition of research varies from discipline to discipline and expert to expert. This variation in the definition and understanding of research can be attributed to the different philosophies that underpin research thinking. According to Kumar (2014), a person’s belief in a particular philosophy, underpinning the mode of enquiry, shapes their opinion about the appropriateness of the methods for finding answers to their research questions.

4.4 Methodology and methods

The terms methodology and methods are often confused and used interchangeably, yet they are distinct. Saunders *et al.* (2009) indicate that sometimes, confusion exists in the interpretation of the two terms ‘research methodology’ and ‘research methods’ due to numerous authors’ frequent use

of them randomly. Some authors have distinguished between the two terms by using the former to describe how the research ought to be undertaken and the latter, to describe data collection tools. Creswell (2009), views methodology as the overall approach that is taken in the process of the research, from its theoretical foundation to the data collecting and analysing. Saunders *et al.* (2009) state that Methodology can be defined as the study of methods which deals with the philosophical assumptions underlying the research process, whereas Saunders *et al.*, use the term method for indicating the choice of instruments and procedures a researcher uses for gaining and analysing data. A method is a specific technique used for collecting data. Easterby-Smith *et al* (2012:18) define methodology as “*a combination of techniques used to inquire into a specific situation.*” Another definition of methodology is given by Kumar (2014:34) who states that “*The path to finding answers to your research questions constitutes research methodology*”. Kumar (2014:34) explains his definition by asserting, “*There are practical steps through which you must pass on your research journey in order to find the answers to your research questions*”. On the other hand, Kumar (1999) defines methods as what researchers use in order to explore, define, understand and describe phenomena, and to analyse the relations among their elements, they are the ways of collecting evidence during data gathering. Hallebone and Priest (2009:27) similarly define the term method as “*procedures, tools, techniques and associated skills that are needed to perform the specific tasks required by the methodology*”.

In order for the aims of this research to be achieved, two different types of data will be collected by the use of two methods: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The method used for the collection of data from students of different levels at Tripoli University in the English department will be with questionnaire surveys, whereas the semi-structured interviews will be conducted with lecturers who teach grammar at Tripoli University, Faculty of Languages, English department. Mixed methods will be employed thereby helping to support the validity and reliability of the findings.

4.4 Research Philosophies:

The Research philosophy constitutes a key element in research methodology. It deals with the nature of research and contains important assumptions about the way the world is viewed (Saunders *et al.* 2012). The term philosophy can be used interchangeably with the terms worldviews and paradigms (Creswell 2014). Collis and Hussey (2009), state that the term 'philosophy' is an alternative for the term 'paradigm'. According to Saunders (2009), the research philosophy a researcher adopts contains important assumptions about the way in which the world is viewed. Saunders (2009) states that these assumptions will underpin the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2007) describe a paradigm as a world view or basic belief system that acts as a guide to an investigation. Bryman, also argue that the research paradigm enables researchers to clearly determine an appropriate design strategy for the questions that have been raised by them. Moreover, it also allows the researcher to identify the key components of the study, such as the approaches to be employed in the

research context and the methods to be used for collecting and analysing data. Saunders *et al.* (2009), point out that, an understanding of the research philosophy will, consequently, enrich the grasp that the researcher has of scientific knowledge and enable them to apply this to the study field in order to improve their research accuracy. Guba (1990:17) defines paradigms as “*a basic set of beliefs that guide action*”, whereas Creswell (2013:06) prefers the term philosophical world views and defines it as “*a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study*”. Although the three terms paradigm, worldview and research philosophy convey more or less the same meaning, this study will use the term philosophy. Research philosophies are concerned with the progression of scientific practice based on people’s views and assumptions concerning knowledge, and its inherent nature (Collis and Hussey 2009). However, each philosophy is neither better nor worse than the other, but they are better in the way of suitability for the research question (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). As asserted by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002: 27), there are three main reasons why a person should understand philosophy in research;

- It can help to clarify the research design by considering what kind of evidence is needed and how it should be gathered and interpreted, in addition to how this will provide good answers to the basic questions which are being investigated
- A knowledge of philosophy can help the researcher recognise which design will work and which will not.
- It can also help the researcher identify and even create, designs that may be outside his or her experience.

Literature related to methodology indicates that numerous authors highlights two key philosophies in research, i.e. positivism and interpretivism (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The table 5 below illustrates the difference between the two philosophies.

Table 5: implications of the philosophies of positivism and interpretivism

| | Positivism | Interpretivism |
|---------------------|---|--|
| The observer | Must be independent | Is part of what is being observed |
| Human interests | Should be irrelevant | Are the main drivers of science |
| Explanation | Must demonstrate causality | Aim to increase general understanding of the situation |
| Research progresses | through Hypotheses and deductions | Through gathering rich data from which ideas are induced |
| Concepts | Need to be operationalized so that they can be measured | Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives |
| Units of analysis | Should be reduced to simplest terms | May include the complexity of whole situations |
| Generalization | through Statistical probability | Through theoretical abstraction |
| Sampling requires | Large numbers selected randomly | Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons |

Source: Easterby-Smith *et al.*, (2008)

The central debate amongst researchers is associated with the matters of two assumptions or ways of thinking, which are ontology and epistemology (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Each one of these assumptions about research philosophies, which will be discussed in the following sections, entail important differences, influencing the way of thinking according to the research process (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

4.4.1. Epistemology

Epistemology is about how knowledge is obtained. It is a theory of knowledge which is about what is considered as acceptable knowledge in a particular discipline (Bryman 2004). Saunders et al. (2007:102) indicate, “*An epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge in the field of study.*” According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002a) epistemology assumes that knowledge needs to be based on observations of external reality. Schraw (2013) also considers epistemology to be a theory of knowledge and rationality. Schraw (2013) states that philosophical accounts of epistemology traditionally differentiate between the types of knowledge and the justification of knowledge, whereas the term epistemological beliefs which has been widely used, refers to a specific belief about some aspect of knowledge that is a part of a broader epistemology (Schraw 2013). From his point of view, this implies that people may have more than one epistemological belief that is part of a set of beliefs, which constitute a personal epistemology. Partington (2002) indicates that epistemology assumptions can be regarded as a question of the ‘what’ with the ‘how’, in order to explore knowledge.

4.4.2. Ontology

Ontology can be defined as a theory of the nature of social entities (Bryman 2004). Schraw (2013), describes ontology as the nature of reality and being. Stainton Rogers (2006), claims that ontology is about the nature of the world, what it consists of, what entities operate within it and how they interrelate to each other. According to Neuman (2011), ontology is an area of philosophy that is concerned with what exists. It asks what the fundamental categories of

reality are. Bahari (2012), believes that ontology can be regarded as the nature of a phenomenon and could be thought of in terms of the subjective-objective dimension. Hallebone and Priest (2009), point out that ontology incorporates the questions that a researcher has about the way the world operates. Hence, it is the study of what exists and the way a reality is perceived. Walliman (2006:15) also attempts to define ontology as being *“about the theory of social entities and is concerned with what there exists to be investigated.* Walliman (2006:16) further points out, *“the way that social research questions are formulated and the way research is carried out is based on the ontological viewpoint of the researcher”.*

According to Saunders et al (2009), ontology includes two aspects, which are objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism expresses that social entities are positioned externally from the social researchers, whereas reality of the social phenomena concerning subjectivism is formed by the perceptions and actions of the social researchers, as the reality exists in individuals’ consciousness (Saunders et al., 2009). More precisely, Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) divide ontology into four categories as presented in table 6 below.

Table 6: Different types of ontologies

| Ontology | Realism | Internal Realism | Relativism | Nominalism |
|----------|---------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Truth | Single truth | Truth exists, but is obscure. | There are many truths | There is no truth |
| Fact | Facts exist and can be revealed | Facts are concrete, but cannot be accessed directly. | Facts depend on viewpoint of observer. | Facts are all human creation. |

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (2012)

Schraw (2013), states that although ontology and epistemology are commonly discussed independently, at a certain point the two assumptions are quite related for the reason that beliefs about how a person comes to know a reality necessarily involves epistemological assumptions. Burton *et al.* (2014), point out that reality from the positivist perspective is to be discovered. It is objective, rational and independent from the observer, whereas from the interpretivist viewpoint, reality is a construct. It is multi-dimensional, ever changing and dependent on different frames of reference. Table 7 below shows philosophical assumptions of positivism and interpretivism.

Table 7: Assumptions of the two main research philosophies

| Meta-theoretical Assumptions About | Positivism | Interpretivism |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Ontology | Person (Alexander <i>et al.</i>) and reality are separate | Person (researcher and reality are inseparable (life-world) |
| Epistemology | Objective reality exists beyond the human mind | Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's lived experience. |
| Research Object | Research object has inherent qualities that exist independently of the researcher. | Research object is interpreted in light of meaning structure of person's (researcher's) lived experience. |
| Method | Statistics, content analysis | Hermeneutics, phenomenology, etc. |
| Theory of Truth | Correspondence theory of truth: one-to-one mapping between research statements and reality. | Truth as intentional fulfilment: interpretations of research object match lived experience of object. |
| Validity | Certainty: data truly measures reality. | Defensible knowledge claims. |
| Reliability | Replicability: research results can be reproduced | Interpretive awareness: Researchers recognise and address implications of their subjectivity. |

Source: (Weber 2004)

As mentioned earlier, researchers such as Collis and Hussey (2009), Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012) and Saunders *et al.* (2012) differentiate between two key philosophies, which are positivism and interpretivism. Saunders *et al.* (2012), state that positivism considers the world as external and objective, whereas, interpretivism views the world as socially constructed and subjective. Therefore, the next two sections will be devoted to these two key philosophies.

4.4.3. Positivism

A positivist philosophy is based upon a highly structured methodology in order to enable generalisation and quantifiable observations and to evaluate the results with the help of statistical methods. Saunders *et al.* (2003), indicates that positivism is generally used in natural science as a philosophy of unchanging, universal law and the view of everything that occurs in nature. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) positivism aims to generate hypotheses that can be tested and replicated by others to verify results. Creswell (2005) argues that in the positivist philosophy, the world and people are studied as objective things. Data, which are considered as being independent of the researcher, are accepted as scientific evidence only if they are collected according to strict rules. Therefore, the scientific method is considered objective and research is concerned with the scientific rules that researchers follow. Similarly, Saunders *et al.* (2012) argue that the positivist's view is to test the theory and use controls to allow hypothesis testing. They also indicate that data obtained as part of a positivist study are generally quantitative, therefore enabling statistical analysis. Collins and Hussey (2003) and

Easterby-Smith (2012) state that in the positivism philosophy, the social world is external to the researcher and its properties should be measured by means of objective methods. Furthermore, Creswell (2005) points out that positivist studies have outcomes, which are related to the results of natural and physical studies, in that the findings or results can be made into law-like generalisations.

4.4.4. Interpretivism

A contrasting philosophy to the positivist is the interpretivist approach. Bryman and Bell (2011), state that what makes this approach distinctive from positivism is the differences between the subject matters of the natural and social sciences. According to Hallebone and Priest (2009), interpretivism includes an insider outlook on social phenomenon. The data gained as part of an interpretivist study are qualitative. In applied linguistic research, three types of data can be identified: qualitative data, quantitative data and language data for which different methodologies have been developed, to analyse and collect them (Dörnyei 2007). Language data differ from qualitative and quantitative data, in that it involves language samples elicited from the respondent primarily for the purpose of language analysis such as a recorded language task or a solicited student essay that is to be submitted to discourse analysis although it is categorised under qualitative data (Dörnyei 2007).

Guthrie (2010), states that the essence of interpretivism philosophy is that knowledge is considered as cultural and has many forms, which makes it subjective. In these forms are:

1. data are regarded as dependent on the relationship between the researcher and the respondent;
2. data are not put in pre-defined categories;
3. The scientific methods are considered as social constructs and research is not restricted to a set of scientific rules but rather it follows what researchers do.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) believe that this philosophy forms part of the social constructionism, where the focus is on the way people make sense of the world and determine reality through sharing their experiences using language. Creswell (2003) and Collis and Hussey (2009) maintain that phenomenology, which is another label for interpretivism, refers to the subjective aspects of human activity by focusing on the meaning rather than the measurement of social phenomena. For the purpose of this study, collecting quantitative and qualitative data are deemed justifiable to achieve the researcher's objectives.

Creswell (2005) points out that research philosophy has fundamental assumptions and, therefore, implications for how research should be undertaken. Furthermore, Easterby-Smith *et al.*, (2003) indicate that, in general, the establishment of the most appropriate philosophy for a study is still debated and so it is important to have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different paradigms for different research situations. Table 8 illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of the two philosophies Positivism and Interpretivism.

Table 8: Strengths and weaknesses of the two main philosophies

| Philosophies | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|----------------|--|--|
| Positivism | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May provide broad coverage of the range of a situation. Can be economical and fast. 2. Where statistics are aggregated from large samples, they can be of considerable relevance to policy decisions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Methods employed tend to be rather artificial and inflexible. 2. Not very effective for understanding processes or the significance that people attach to actions. 3. Not very helpful in generating theories. 4. In having a focus on what is, or what has been recently, positivist approaches make it hard for policy makers to infer what actions and changes ought to take place in the future. |
| Interpretivism | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data-gathering methods seen as natural rather than artificial. 2. Ability to look at change processes overtime. 3. Ability to understand people's meaning. 4. Ability to adjust to new issues and ideas as they emerge. 5. Contribute to theory generation. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collection can be tedious and require more resources. 2. Analysis and interpretation of data may be more difficult. 3. Harder to control the pace, progress and end-points of research process. 4. Policy makers may give low credibility to results emerging from qualitative approach. |

Source:(Amaratunga *et al.* 2002)

4.5. Justification for the research philosophy selected for this study

The choice of the research philosophy is based on the nature of the problem, the research objectives, and the research questions along with the extent of the existing knowledge, time and other resources of data (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It is suggested by Creswell (2009) that research philosophies have fundamental assumptions and implications concerning how research should be carried out. Jankowicz (2000), emphasises that there is no straightforward rule which obliges the researcher to choose one method for one investigation and another for another investigation. A positivist philosophy is based on objective reality using facts and figures, whereas interpretivist is subjective

and knowledge is based on meaning and interpretation. According to Creswell (2014), there is no research philosophy that is more superior or less inferior to any other philosophy. The positivist philosophy is considered by Cameron and Price (2009:34) as an objective view of reality, which analyses situations by *“identifying parts and interrelationships”*. Moreover, Hallebone and Priest (2009:26) claim that research philosophy is *“an explicit fundamental assumption and frame of reference that underpins a way to conceive of, and know about the reality that is being researched.”* A researcher who expects to use a positivist philosophy will use quantitative methods to collect the data. The reality exists whether it can be detected or not and when this reality is observed, the data can be collected and interpreted using statistics.

The first phase of this study seeks to find out the different views and perceptions of the students in the English department, Faculty of Languages at Tripoli University concerning the teaching and learning of grammar through obtaining numerical evidence. Through the use of a questionnaire as an instrument of collecting quantitative data, the researcher aims to reach as many students as possible, by targeting the whole population, in order to gauge their views and perceptions. The researcher intends to act as an outsider so that the participants do not feel pressured or influenced by the researcher and to avoid bias, which is one of the weaknesses of the questionnaire, in order to obtain reliable and fruitful results.

4.6. Research approaches

Saunders *et al.*, (2009) consider that the choice of methodology for research relies primarily, on important circumstances, such as the area of study, the aims and objectives of the research and findings that the literature review has revealed. Similarly, the research approach selected for this study mainly depends upon these circumstances. Therefore, the way the chosen approach is relevant to the context and setting of the research dictates its success, by researchers following either a deductive or an inductive approach in order to gain new knowledge.

Bryman and Bell (2007) state that any kind of research is connected to theory, which influences the collection, and analysis of data, while another approach is to assume that theory occurs after the collection and analysis of project related data. There are two approaches between theory and research that represent deductive and inductive theory. Patton (2002), states that one of the central differences between these approaches lies in how existing literature and theory are used to guide the research. The deductive approach is designed to test a theory; by contrast, the inductive approach builds a theory as the research progresses.

4.6.1. Inductive and deductive approach

Consideration of the research approach is important so that the theories lying behind the research design are made explicit. The researcher can then make better decisions, identify what works and adopt a research design that is

appropriate for coping with constraints. An approach that is inductive involves a process of observing data for the generation of a theory (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). The inductive approach is concerned with generating or building a new theory therefore, this approach involves starting from clear observation of particular issues and then concludes with the construction of generalisation about the phenomenon being examined (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Rubin and Babbie (2009:39) conclude that either deductive or inductive approaches can be used for theories to influence the research process:

“An inductive approach is a research process based on inductive logic in which the researcher begins with observations, seeks patterns in those observations, and generates tentative conclusions from those patterns. A deductive approach is a research process based on deductive logic, in which the research begins with a theory, then derives hypotheses, and ultimately collects observations to test the hypotheses.”

In contrast, the deductive approach involves gathering facts for the confirmation or rejection of hypothesised relationships between variables that are deduced from already existing knowledge. Accordingly, deductive research begins with existing concepts and theories while hypotheses are formulated and later tested using empirical data; inductive research begins from empirical data from which concepts, models and theories are derived Trochim (2006). It is a theory that represents the most popular approach in terms of nature between research and theory (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The deductive approach is often related to positivism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It

uses the development and testing of a theory but has a tendency to construct an inflexible methodology (Saunders et al., 2012). Robson (2002) suggests that the progression of deductive research contains a progressive five-stage process that seeks to test theory. The five-stage process involves firstly deducing theories which arise from the current literature. Then the theory is expressed in operational terms, proposing a relationship between two specific concepts or variables. From this, an appropriate method is determined, which for the purpose of this study will be predominantly using questionnaires with additional information to inform discussion of the questionnaires provided through semi-structured interviews. Once the data has been collected, the information will be examined to determine specific outcomes of the enquiry. Finally, if necessary, the theory will be modified in the light of the findings. The following table displays the difference between the two approaches:

Table 9: Differences between deductive and inductive approaches

| Deductive approach | Inductive approach |
|--|--|
| Scientific principles | Gaining an understanding of the meaning humans attach to events |
| Moving from theory to data | A close understanding of the research context |
| The need to explain the causal relationship among variables | The collection of qualitative data |
| The collection of quantitative data | A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as research processes |
| The application of controls to ensure validity of data | A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process |
| The operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition | Less concern with the need to generalise |
| A highly structure approach | |
| Researcher's independence of what is being researched | |
| The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generate a conclusion | |

Source: Saunders *et al.*, (2009:127)

4.6.2. Justification for selecting the research approach

After identifying that, the positivism paradigm would guide the research philosophy, it is equally important to identify the research approach that will be used in this research. In order to establish facts and draw conclusions Saunders et al. (2007) suggest the distinction between two research approaches, namely the inductive approach and the deductive approach. According to Greener (2011:3), inductive research works from data to build a theory whereas deductive research tests a theory through the use of quantitative data. Saunders et al. (2012) point out that a researcher uses a

deductive approach when they start with a theory and designs a research strategy to test the theory; however, a researcher uses an inductive approach if s/he starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon and generates a theory. One of the main differences between the two approaches (inductive and deductive) is the data collection method. In a deductive approach, a quantitative method is used while in an inductive approach, qualitative data collection method is used (Collins and Hussey, 2003). Hair et al. (2007) argue that while inductive reasoning is related to identifying patterns within a large amount of data effectively, deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the deductive method increases credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data. The deductive approach was suited to fulfil the purpose and aim of this study. In this research, the researcher used the quantitative method to collect the data and samples of adequate size to reach conclusions for this study. Positivist, quantitative and deductive is appropriate for the study based on the nature of the problem and the research questions and objectives. According to Jankowicz (1991) the purpose of research and its problem are the base for methods and techniques selection.

4.7 Types of data

Greener (2011) states that in research, two types of data can be collected; primary data and secondary data. The first is when researchers collect data in some way (e.g. interviews and surveys) for themselves, whereas secondary data is when researchers conduct a review of others work or are looking at sources that were collected by someone else (Greener 2011). Similarly,

another definition is given by Walliman (2011) who points out that data comes in two main forms; data that has been observed, experienced or recorded, close to the event are the nearest, the researcher can get to the truth and are called primary data. Written sources which interpret or record primary data are called secondary sources which as stated by Walliman (2011:70) “*will give you less accurate information than what you gained by experiencing the event yourself*”.

4.7.1 Secondary data

Because this research is based on the existing theories and studies, the literature was reviewed in depth in order to achieve a good understanding of the researched field. The secondary data, already collected and studied by other researchers, includes different sources of literature like books, journals, articles and different surveys, etc. (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, secondary data should be examined before any primary data is collected, because it is necessary to examine what has already been generated about the topic and if it will be suitable to meet the objectives of the study (Blaxter et al. 2010)

4.7.2. Primary data

In relation to the primary data, it is vital to choose the most appropriate research method, because the reliability and validity of the empirical findings may differ depending on the methodology applied. Bryman and Bell (2007) state that a standardised questionnaire is quite a reliable tool that could be utilised for quantitative research.

4.8. Data collection techniques

There are two different techniques on how to collect primary data (as stated by Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2007). These two methods are quantitative data collection methods and qualitative data collection methods. Each data collection method is different from the other with respect to research philosophy, and execution (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Creswell (2005) believes that researchers have a choice of three approaches for research methodology, namely: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative and qualitative methods can produce valuable information in any study. They can serve different purposes and at the same time complete each other. Creswell (2009) and Saunders *et al.*, (2009) have suggested several principles for determining the adoption of an appropriate approach to research. These principles are:

1- Topic of the research.

When there is a lot of literature to help in the development of a theoretical framework and hypotheses, a quantitative/deductive approach may be suitable. For a new topic that has little existing literature, it may be more appropriate to employ a qualitative/inductive approach.

2- Time available for the research.

Qualitative research can be much more time consuming than quantitative research, and so adopting quantitative may be a lower risk approach.

4.8.1. Quantitative methods

A quantitative research method involves data collection procedures, which result in numerical data, which is then analysed by the use of statistical methods (Dörnyei 2007). Quantitative research is associated with the positivist philosophy. It was originally inspired by the remarkable progress of the natural sciences in the nineteenth century. Researchers set out to adopt what was called the scientific method in their investigations. Quantitative research is concerned with common features between groups rather than individuals. Therefore, it is centred on the study of variables that capture these features. Quantitative data are based on numbers such as: population count, economic data, and scientific measurements (Walliman 2006). The quantitative method has numerous advantages: it is systematic; it has precise measurements, and reliable data that can be generalised, depending on how they are collected.

Quantitative research generates statistics through the use of large-scale survey using methods such as questionnaires. This type of method reaches many participants which is much quicker and easier than qualitative research (Dawson 2002). An advantage to this method is that the data can be validated using statistics. It can be used to measure the occurrence of various views and can be followed up by qualitative research to explore some findings further. In general, Richards and Schmidt (2002:436) state that quantitative research *“uses procedures that gather data in numerical form... It aims at causal explanation of phenomena through the identification of variables which can be made the basis of experimental investigation.”* Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2007) state that quantitative research and its collection is characterized by a

deductive approach in terms of theory and research, the principles and values of a natural scientific model of positivism, and the point of view that social reality is external and objective. According to Payne and Payne (2004), practically all methods of quantitative research share certain features:

1. The main concern is to describe and account for regularities in social behaviour;
2. Explanations are expressed as associations between variables, ideally in a form that enables prediction of outcomes from known regularities.
3. Patterns of behaviour can be separated out into variables, and represented by numbers.
4. They explore social phenomena by introducing stimuli like survey questions, collecting data by systematic, repeated and controlled measurements.
5. They are based on the assumption that social processes exist outside of individual actors' comprehension, constraining individual actions, and accessible to researchers by virtue of their prior theoretical and empirical knowledge.

4.8.2 Qualitative method

Walliman (2006) maintains that qualitative data cannot be measured and counted accurately and are generally expressed in words rather than in numbers. Qualitative methods includes data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data, which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods (Dörnyei 2007). Furthermore, qualitative research

is associated with interpretivist philosophy. It is possibly more flexible in its response to new openings that may occur in the research process. Shank (2002:4) describes qualitative research as “*a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning*”, while Denzin and Lincoln (2011:3) state that qualitative research involves an “*interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them*”. Additionally, Berg (2004:11) states that qualitative research “*provides the framework to explore, define, and assist in understanding the social and psychological phenomena of organisations and the social settings of individuals*”. The analytical categories and the research questions may be redefined during this process. Qualitative methods are concerned with individuals’ subjective opinions and experiences. The research is normally conducted in a natural setting and the sample size is often quite small. The qualitative analysis is considered to be interpretive, which means that the outcome is the result of the researcher’s interpretation of the data. There are several advantages of qualitative methods: sense can be made of complex situations, although there is a danger that the researcher makes too simple interpretations of the findings. However, qualitative methods can broaden the understanding of a phenomenon with its in-depth analysis. Dörnyei (2007) indicates that qualitative methods are criticised by quantitative researchers because of the small size of the samples, which may question the generalisability of the results because the specific conditions of few participants may not be applied broadly to others and because no standardised instruments or statistical analytical techniques are used in order for a

hypothesis to be tested. The following table 11 displays the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative data according to Saunders et al (2009).

4.8.3 Mixed methods

Mixed methods combine quantitative and qualitative methods. By adopting mixed methods one may increase, the strengths may be increased and the weaknesses of each research method reduced. (Patton 1990) strongly emphasises the use of mixed methods, which he calls triangulation because it significantly enhances the accuracy of the data, which is the basis of any research. For more than fifteen years, mixed methods research has been increasingly considered as a third approach in research methodology (Dörnyei 2007). Although Creswell (2012) indicates that using both qualitative and quantitative methods is time-consuming as it requires collecting and analysing extensive data, he specifies that this combination of methods provides a better understanding of the research problem and questions than using one method by itself. Creswell (2014) also stresses, that using a mixed methods approach provides a broader perspective to the study and a more complete understanding of the research problem. Dörnyei (2011:45) argues that there are numerous arguments put forward to emphasise the value of mixing methods:

1. Increasing the strengths while eliminating the weaknesses. The potential that the strengths of one mixed method can be utilised to overcome the weaknesses of another method used in the study.
2. Multi-level analysis of complex issues. Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to

words.

3. Improved validity. Mixed methods research has a unique potential to produce evidence for the validity of research outcomes through the convergence and corroboration of the findings.
4. Research multiple audiences. By combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the results are usually more acceptable to a larger audience than those of a mono-method study would be.

Kumar (2014:14) states that "*The mixed methods approach uses the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research...it combines two or more methods to collect and analyse data*". In addition, a better understanding of a phenomenon may be achieved by including both numeric trends and specific details. Mixed methods may improve the validity of the research and allow for making generalisations, which is normally not easily done in a qualitative research method alone.

The findings gained from using mixed methods may be more applicable and therefore reach a larger audience. Finally, there may be a belief that investigating the sum is better than investigating the parts, which may in some cases be unsuccessful (Dörnyei 2007). The table 13 below displays a distinction between the three different research methods as specified by (Creswell 2003).

Table 10: Quantitative, mixed methods and qualitative research

| | Quantitative Research | Mixed Methods | Qualitative Research |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Scientific method | Deductive ;The researcher tests hypotheses and theory with data | Deductive and inductive | Inductive; the researcher generates new hypotheses and grounded theory from data collected during fieldwork |
| View of human behaviour | Behaviour is regular and predictable | Behaviour is some-what predictable | Behaviour is fluid, dynamic, situational, social, contextual, and personal |
| Most common research objectives | Description, explanation, and prediction | Multiple objectives | Description, exploration, and discovery |
| Focus | Narrow-angle lens, testing specific hypotheses | Multi-lens focus | Wide-angle and “deep-angle” lens, examining the breadth and depth of phenomena to learn more about them |
| Nature of observation | Attempt to study behaviour under controlled conditions | Study behaviour in more than one context or condition | Study behaviour in natural environments. Study the context in which behaviour occurs |
| Nature of reality | Objective (different observers agree on what is observed) | Common sense realism and pragmatic view of world (i.e. what works is what is “real” or true) | Subjective, personal, and socially constructed |
| Form of data collected | Collect quantitative data using structured and validated data collection instruments (e.g. closed-ended items, rating scales, behavioural responses) | Multiple forms | Collect qualitative data (e.g. in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and open-ended questions) The researcher is the primary data collection instrument |
| Nature of data | Variables | Mixture of variables, words, and images | Words, images, categories |
| Data analysis | Identify statistical relationships | Quantitative and qualitative | Search for patterns, themes, and holistic features |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Results | Generalizable findings | Corroborated findings may generalize | Particularistic findings. Representation of insider (i.e. "emic") viewpoint. Present multiple perspectives |
| Form of final report | Statistical report (e.g. with correlations, comparisons of means, and reporting of statistical significance of findings) | Eclectic and pragmatic | Narrative report with contextual description and direct quotations from research participants |

Source: Creswell (2003)

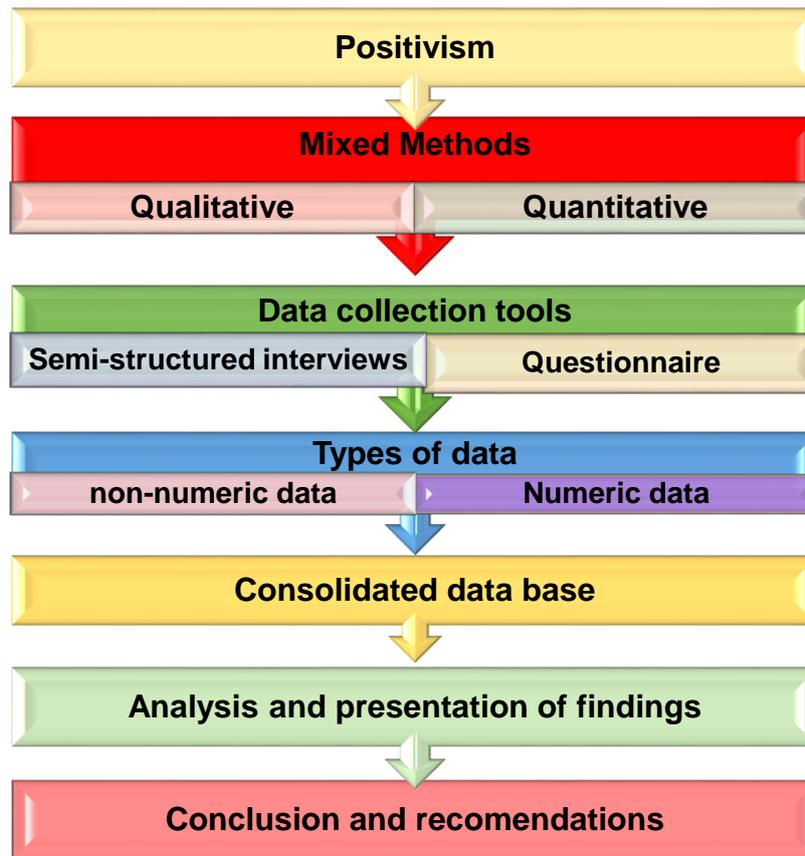
4.8.4. Justification for the selection of mixed methods

There is an on-going debate as to which method is better than the other. According to (Robson 2002) and (Jankowicz 2000), there is no upfront way to rationalise which method is better than another for a specific research. Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses, which varies depending upon the nature of the topic.

The philosophical paradigm underpinning this study is predominantly positivist because this study aims to find out the answer to an inquiry through numerical evidence. However, based on the research questions, the nature of the problem and objectives, this study will use mixed methods because the researcher aims to benefit from the strength of each method to obtain a wide variety of data as well as gaining an in-depth understanding of the subject. According to Kumar, (2014:25) the justification underpinning the mixed methods approach is mainly based upon two beliefs. The first "relates to the

ability of methods of a paradigm to provide accurate answers to all research questions in all situations.” and the second belief is that *“the use of more than one method in most situations will provide a better and more complete picture of a situation than a single method alone.”* In this stance, the research method dominating this mixed method study will be quantitative. This choice arises from the awareness of the intention of reaching as many participants as possible in order to address the proposed research questions. The quantitative method chosen is demonstrated by the use of a survey questionnaire aimed at all the students in Tripoli University, English language department in order to measure their views and beliefs about grammar. The second method was to conduct further semi-structured interviews involving lecturers to enable a deeper understanding of the teaching process of grammar at Tripoli University and in order to provide rich descriptive data to support the findings from quantitative data. The figure below illustrates the methodology chosen for this study.

Figure 3: Methodology architecture



(Compiled by the researcher)

4.9. Types of research

Blaikie (2011) indicates that research purposes are concerned with the types of knowledge a researcher wants to produce. According to Blaikie (2011) there are two types of research; basic and applied. The purpose of basic research is to explore, describe, explain, understand and predict, whereas the purpose of applied research is to predict, change, evaluate and assess impacts. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012) there are three main purposes of research: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. While Gray (2014) indicates that there are four purposes of research; exploratory, descriptive, Explanatory and interpretive studies. . Hair et al. (2007) provide a

distinction between exploratory and descriptive research. Hair et al. (2007) claim that exploratory research is used when the researcher has little knowledge or information of the research problem; specifically, to clarify his/her understanding of a problem and gain insights about a topic of interest, whereas descriptive research is defined by Hair et al. (2007:419) as “*research designed to obtain data that describes the characteristics of the topic of interest in the research*”. Similarly, Punch (2005 cited in Gray 2014:36) states:

“Where a research area is relatively new or unexplored, descriptive studies may be adequate. However for well worked research areas, where there is already a plethora of descriptive information, a more exploratory approach is advisable.”

Robson (2011), argues that there are three main purposes of research put forward which are; to explore, to describe and to explain. Robson (2011) stresses that while one purpose is usually considered as central to a research; some studies may be concerned with more than one purpose. From Robson’s (2011) point of view, the purpose of a research may change as the study proceeds, especially in mixed method research. In the light of these assumptions, and because this research is using a mixed method approach, the purpose of this research is descriptive and exploratory.

4.10 Research strategy

Saunders et al., (2009:600) defines research strategy as “*a general plan that helps the researcher in answering the research questions in a systematic way*”.

It deals with the inclusive plan, which a researcher follows in order to answer the research questions and to satisfy the aims and objectives (Creswell, 2009).

Similarly, Saunders et al, (2009) states that the choice of research strategy depends on the research questions and objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, the available time, in addition to the available resources. Likewise,

Robson (2002: 80) who also states “*The general principle is that the research strategy or strategies, and the methods or techniques employed, must be appropriate for the questions you want to answer*”. Saunders et al, (2009) list

seven types of research strategies, which are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, analysis of archival records, and ethnography,), whereas Yin (2003) considers only five strategies, which are shown in the table below exhibiting the relationship between the research strategy and the question(s) the research is trying to answer.

Table 11: Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

| strategy | Form of research question | Requires control over behavioural events | Focuses on contemporary events |
|-------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| experiment | How and why | yes | yes |
| survey | Who - what-where - how many - how much | yes | No |
| Archival analysis | Who - what-where - how many - how much | yes | Yes/No |
| History | How and why | No | No |
| Case study | How and why | No | Yes |

Source: (Yin 2003)

According to (Saunders *et al.*, 2009) each strategy can be employed to the three different research purposes; descriptive, exploratory or explanatory research. Yet, often allocating strategies to one approach or the other is unjustifiably simplistic. In addition, (Saunders *et al.*, 2009) also emphasise that no research strategy is inherently superior or inferior to any other. From (Saunders *et al.*, 2009) point of view what is most important is not the label that is attached to a certain strategy, but whether it will enable the researchers to answer their research question(s) and meet their objectives. However,

4.12.1 Sequential mixed methods strategy

This strategy is of two types; the first type is characterised by the collection and analysis of quantitative data as a first stage followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data as a second stage. The qualitative data builds on the results of the quantitative results, it is known as the sequential

explanatory strategy. Alternatively, in the other type, which is called the sequential exploratory strategy, the researcher collects and analyses the qualitative data as a first phase followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis, which builds on the results of the qualitative results (Creswell 2009).

4.12.2 Sequential Transformative mixed methods strategy

The sequential transformative strategy as defined by Creswell (2009:212) is a *“two phase project with a theoretical lens (e.g. gender, race, social science theory) overlaying the sequential procedures”* similar to the other strategies, it also has two phases where the first is either qualitative or quantitative, followed by the second phase which builds on the first. This strategy is usually used by researchers who have chosen a transformative framework as a paradigm underpinning their study Creswell (2009).

4.12.3 Concurrent triangulation strategy

In this strategy the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to give a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. This type of strategy is divided into three types; concurrent triangulation, concurrent embedded and concurrent transformative strategy. Creswell (2009) states that the concurrent strategy is the most familiar type where the researcher collects both the quantitative and qualitative data at the same time and then compares the results in order to determine if there is convergence, difference or combination.

4.12.4 Concurrent embedded strategy

The second type is the concurrent embedded strategy. This type is different from triangulation in the sense that it has a primary method which guides the project and a secondary data base which provides a supporting role to the previous method. The secondary method is embedded within the predominant method. According to this strategy, the purpose of mixing the quantitative and the qualitative is to integrate the information and compare one data source with the other which is usually done in the discussion part of the research. Moreover, the two types of data can be presented side by side as two separate pictures, which provide an overall combined assessment of the problem.

4.12.5 Concurrent Transformative mixed methods strategy

Concurrent transformative strategy as stated by Creswell (2009) is a strategy where the researcher is guided by the use of a specific theoretical perspective in addition to the concurrent collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The perspective, which guides the researcher could be based on ideologies such as critical theory advocacy, participatory research or a conceptual or theoretical structure (Creswell 2009).

4.12.6 Justification of the selection of the research purpose and strategy

As a starting point, the research purpose chosen for this study must be clarified so as to find a suitable research strategy for answering the research question. In this study, the research purpose is deemed as descriptive and exploratory.

It is descriptive because the researcher attempts to describe the current status of teaching and learning of grammar by examining the attitudes and beliefs of the students at Tripoli University. This study is also exploratory in the sense that it will look into the teachers' views and attitudes regarding how grammar is taught, how it should be taught and the difficulties that challenge them in the grammar teaching process.

The concurrent embedded strategy has been adopted in this research. The quantitative method will be the main method which guides this study through the use of a questionnaire which will be distributed to as many students as possible, in order to form a picture of the current teaching and learning of grammar. Qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews is primary data whose results aim to complement and supplement quantitative data obtained through surveys. The qualitative data through the use of semi structured interviews, targeted the lecturers of grammar at the university, in order to further investigate into the teaching of grammar at Tripoli University. The results of the questionnaire and the interviews will be presented side by side and compared in certain points in order to get a full understanding of teaching and learning grammar at Tripoli University. The rationale for combining the quantitative and qualitative data is to better understand the research problem and effectively answer the research questions. The choice of a concurrent strategy for this study is because the collection of the data is not dependent on one another because each data collection method is employed to answer different research questions.

4.11. Instruments for collecting data

Research methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies. (Creswell 2014). Saunders et al. (2012) describe research methods as a way of collecting, analysing and interpreting data that the researcher obtained for their studies. There are numerous forms of methods for collecting quantitative and qualitative data for research but this study will select the use of two, which are the questionnaires and interviews for collecting the data.

4.11.1. Questionnaire

The main data collection instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. Greener (2011:39) defines a questionnaire as “*a type of survey involving, unsurprisingly, asking subjects to respond to a range of questions, often in a self-completion form*”. Greener indicates that questionnaires are a widely used method for data collection, and known for their efficiency in collecting information and being able to process it easily. Kumar (2011) describes a questionnaire as a written list of questions where answers are recorded by respondents. Babbie (2013) indicates that a questionnaire is “*a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate for analysis*”. Babbie (2013), states that questionnaires are used primarily in survey research but they can also be used in experiments, field research and other modes of observation.

Jankowicz (2000:222) states, "Questionnaires are particularly useful when you want to contact relatively large numbers of people to obtain data on the same issue or issues often by posing the same questions to all." The advantage of conducting a questionnaire is that it simplifies the collection of data in a pre-arranged form, which can be readily analysed (Kumar 2005). Each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a fixed order. The questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection techniques within the survey strategy. It provides an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis (Saunders, et al. 2009). There are three types of scales, in a questionnaire, that measure attitude. Kumar (2014: 209) points out "*the Likert, Thurston and Guttman scales. The Likert scale is most commonly used because it is easy to construct.*" Bryman (2012:166) states that the Likert scale:

Is essentially a multiple-indicator or multiple-item measure of a set of attitudes relating to a particular area. The goal of the Likert scale is to measure intensity of feelings about the area in question. In its most common format, it comprises a series of statements (known as 'items') that focus on a certain issue or theme.

Bertram (2007:07) indicates that the advantages of the Likert scale are that they are simple to construct, they are likely to produce a highly reliable scale and they are easy to read and complete for participants. Bryman (2012:166) highlights several points in the construction of a Likert-scale. The following ones are particularly important; the items must be "*statements and not questions, the items must all relate to the same object, and the items that take up the scale should be interrelated*".

The questionnaire of the study employed a Five-Point-Likert–Scale, which is one of the most common techniques for conducting such an investigation. All the responses are ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. There is also a neutral middle option so that the participants who do not have a response to the research statement could select this option (Sekaran, 2003). The aim of the questionnaire in this study is to identify the participants' perceptions about grammar and its importance in teaching and learning. Dörnyei (2003) states that questionnaires can yield three types of data about the respondent;

4.11.1.1. Factual questions

Which are used to find out information about the respondents. They cover demographic features such as (age, gender and race), level of education, in addition to religion and occupation. It also includes any other background information.

4.11.1.2. Behavioural questions

These questions try to find out what the respondents are doing and what they have done in the past. They ask about peoples' habits, personal history and lifestyle.

4.11.1.3. Attitudinal questions

These questions try to find out what people think. They include questions about attitudes, opinions and beliefs, interests and values. Dawson (2009) divides

questionnaires into three types: Closed-ended, open-ended, or a combination of both. Closed-ended questionnaires are used to generate statistics in quantitative research. These questionnaires follow a set format with boxes to tick or scales to rank. Great numbers can be produced because of the ease of analysis. Open-ended questionnaires are used in qualitative research. They consist of a set of questions with a blank section for participants to write their answers. Some researchers use a Combination of both types of questionnaires. Such questionnaires start with a series of closed questions and finish with a section of open questions for more detailed response.

The questionnaire designed for this study aims at gauging the students' attitudes and beliefs about grammar which as stated by Dornyei (2003) has strong factual support and is often concerned with questions as to whether something is true, false or factual. Justification for the choice of survey as an instrument for collecting the data is that it easy to construct, extremely versatile and for its popularity as a research tool in applied linguistics (Dornyei 2007). In addition to its capability to collect a large amount of information in a short period of time especially that this study is targeting the whole population. The following table 15 illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of open and closed questions.

Table 12: Advantages and disadvantages of open and closed questions

| Open questions | Closed questions |
|---|--|
| Tends to be slower to administrate. | Tend to be quicker to administrate. |
| Can be harder to record responses. | Often easier and quicker for the researcher to record responses. |
| May be difficult to code, especially if multiple answers are given. | Tends to be easy to code. |
| They do not stifle response | The respondent can only answer in a predefined way |
| Enable respondents to raise new issues | New issues cannot be raised |
| Respondents feel that they have been able to speak their mind | Respondents can only answer in a way, which may not match their actual opinion. |
| In self-administrated questionnaires, respondents might not be willing to write a long answer and decide to leave the question blank. | Is quick and easy for respondents to tick boxes. |
| Can use open questions to find out all the possible responses before designing a closed ended questionnaire. | Can include a section at the end of a closed ended questionnaire for people to write a longer response if they wish. |

Source: Dawson (2002)

4.11.1.4 Advantages of questionnaires

Dornyei (2003), states that the main attraction of using questionnaires is their efficiency in terms of the researcher's time, effort and financial resources. Questionnaires are also very versatile which means they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics. A researcher can collect a huge amount of data from many participants in a short period of time. In addition, if the questionnaire is well constructed, the analysis of the data can be fast and straight forward, especially if modern computer software is used (Dörnyei 2003).

4.11.1.5 Disadvantages of questionnaires:

Dörnyei (2003) states that although questionnaires are quite convenient for the researcher in terms of time and money, they do have a number of disadvantages.

1. Simplicity and superficiality of answers. The questions need to be simple and straightforward in order for them to be understood by everyone. Therefore, this is unsuitable for searching deeply into an issue.
2. Unreliable and unmotivated respondents.
3. Respondents' literacy problems.
4. Little or no opportunity to correct respondents' mistakes.
5. Social desirability (prestige) bias. This is when people do not always provide true answers of what they think feel or believe. The main reason for this according to Dörnyei (2003) is prestige bias, which is when a participant answers questions according to what he thinks the researcher desires, accepts or expects, and not what the participant really believes.

4.11.1.6 Questionnaire design

According to Mackey and Gass (2008) the type of questions which are asked in a questionnaire depend on the research questions being addressed in the study. They should also be linked to the purpose of the study (Gray 2014). The questionnaire was designed to investigate the students' perceptions on teaching and learning of English grammar at Tripoli University and whether it has been effective in meeting their needs. The first part of the questionnaire is

designed to develop a profile of the respondents. Students are asked about their age, gender and level of study (the demographic data). The statements in the questionnaire were adopted from the literature. A number of statements were adapted from Schulz (2001) whereas other items were adapted from Loewen *et al.* (2009) and some statements were constructed according to the objectives of the study. The information collected from the questionnaire is used to address the research questions and purpose of the study, therefore it is vital to make the questionnaire statements easy to answer for respondents as they may not be very familiar with the process of filling in questionnaires, and as a result, the whole experience could be overwhelming for them. The five point Likert scale will be used in the questionnaire. The Likert scale was chosen because it is the most commonly used and easy to construct. In addition, each statement in the questionnaire is equally important, which is the main assumption of this scale (Kumar, 2014). Similarly, resembling most studies, certain criteria were applied to assess the validities of the questionnaires, and among these is to discard the questionnaire with major missing values particularly if the entire construct has been missed. Equally important, if the respondent answered all the questions in the same way, for example, selecting the neutral category as an answer for all questions, in this case the questionnaire will be eliminated. The questionnaire was divided into four themes: the importance of grammar, the difficulties of grammar, the teaching and learning of grammar and error correction. This study gathered data from the respondents by distributing 1000 questionnaires to students from the English department, of which 700 questionnaires were returned and 629 were considered valid. This is significantly more than the desired number

specified by Yamen's formula. Furthermore, there were seventy-one discarded questionnaires that have been eliminated by utilising the above-mentioned criteria, which assess the validity of the questionnaires. To ensure that respondents felt confident answering the questionnaire as indicated by Henning and Smit in Henning al. (2004), concerning the necessity of obtaining permission and access, the researcher provided a permission letter from the University, explaining that the collection of data will be used for academic purposes and for this research study only. In order to minimise bias, the questionnaires were not self-administered. The questionnaires were handed to the researcher's colleagues in the department of English at Tripoli University to distribute and then collect. The researcher also did not want to influence the students' answers. In fact, the researcher tried to be neutral. In addition, to help minimise bias the language was clear, and in order to avoid inherent bias framing the questions properly was key.

4.11.1.7. Validity of questionnaire

The definition of validity is a situation where the findings of the research are in agreement with what is designed to be found out. Kumar (2011), states that it is the extent the researcher has measured what he/she set out to measure. Therefore, validity is concerned with two main controversies: whether the instruments used for measurement are accurate and whether they are actually measuring what they set out to measure. Kumar (2011) suggests two approaches in quantitative research to establish the validity and reliability of an instrument including establishing a logical link between the objectives of a study and the question used in an instrument, and the use of the statistical

analysis tool to demonstrate these links. To ensure the validity of the instrument in this study, the researcher checked the format of the questionnaire including the language correctness and appropriateness, clarity of meaning, and printing clarification. The researcher also made sure that the questions in the questionnaire covered all the objectives proposed in the study. There are two different dimensions to the notion of validity; they are internal validity and external validity, which is known as generalisability. Internal validity ensures that the researcher investigates what he/she claims to be investigating, while on the other hand, external validity is concerned with the extent to which the research findings can be generalised to a wider population (Winter 2000). According to Bryman and Bell (2007), there are three types of validity. They are; face and content validity, concurrent and predictive validity, and construct validity. According to face and content validity, each statement on the questionnaire needs to have a logical association with the research objectives and cover the full range of issues being investigated. The following table displays the connection between the statements in the questionnaire and the research objectives

Table 13: Objectives addressed by the questionnaire

| Construct No | Objective No |
|---|--------------|
| Construct two (Difficulties with grammar) | Objective 2 |
| Construct three (Methods and techniques of teaching grammar) Construct four (Error correction) | objective 3 |
| Construct one (The role of grammar) | Objective 4 |

Predictive validity judges the degree to which an instrument can forecast an outcome or a subject's future behaviour in relation to the test's content (Gray 2014), whereas concurrent validity, which is quite similar to predictive validity, looks at how well an instrument compares with second instrument used in the same study concurrently.

Finally, construct validity is a technique based on statistical procedures and therefore it is achieved by determining the contribution of each construct to the total variance observed in a phenomenon. While Content validity is a tool of evaluation, used to confirm that all of components of the variables, which are to be measured in a study, are included in the questionnaire and interview without neglecting important components and is established through the judgement of external experts (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Therefore, in this case to meet this criterion, the researcher reviewed relevant literature before developing the instrument and ensured that all the necessary variables are included.

Before conducting a pilot study, the questionnaire was reviewed by the supervisor to ensure that it measured what it was supposed to. The questionnaire was also checked to a panel of experts from LJMU University as well as other academics in Libya who have knowledge about the Libyan context. Regarding content validity, the concepts that have been used in the questionnaire have been verified by experts in order to ensure that the concepts will reflect the proper meaning intended by the researcher.

Reliability according to Saunders et al. (2012) refers to the extent to which a data collection technique will produce coherent findings. Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2011) describe reliability as a question of whether the results of a study are reputable. Various methods of measuring reliability exist. Weir (2005) claims that reliability is the degree to which the collection of data methods would give results that are consistent. However, this study used the most popular method, which is Cronbach's Alpha (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Considering that the instrument (questionnaire) used in this research had a satisfactory reliability measure of the Cronbach's Alpha, which is .841, the questionnaire used in this research was regarded as a valid instrument.

4.11.1.7. Generalisability of the questionnaire

According to Mackey and Gass (2008:356), generalisability is the *"the extent to which the results of a study can be extended to a greater population"* Another definition is given by Griffiee (2012:66) *"The ability to transfer or apply conclusions reached by studying sample population to a larger population"*. Cohen et al. (2011), state that generalisability can also be known as external validity. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2011) indicates that external validity (generalisability) refers to the degree, which the results of a sample can be generalised to the wider population.

Similar to the definitions above is one given by Walliman (2006) who states that generalisability refers to the results of the research and how far they applicable to locations and situations beyond the scope of the study. The

questionnaire used in this study attempted to reach as many students as possible, and because the number of valid questionnaires (629) exceeds the calculated sample size (333), the results of this study can be generalizable to the whole population which is the English Language Department at Tripoli University and to any English language department with Arabic speakers and similar educational system.

4.12 Sampling

(Dörnyei 2003) indicates that a sample is a group of participants which the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation, whereas the population is the group of people whom the study is about (the target population of the study) which consists of all the people to whom the research findings are to be applied or generalised.

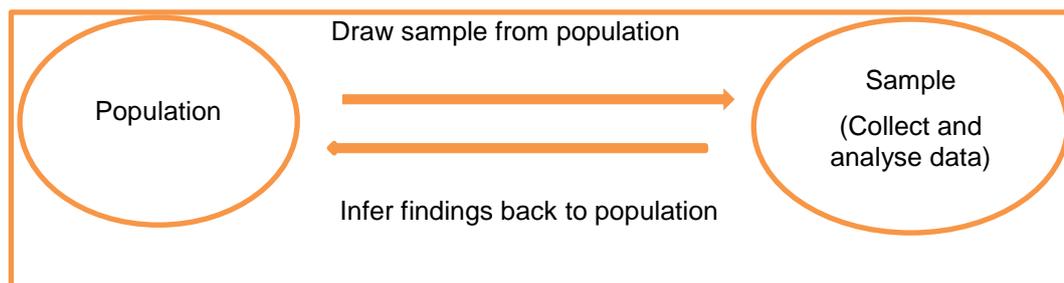
Punch (2013), indicates that the researcher analyses the data collected from the sample, then makes statements about the whole target population from which the sample was drawn. Kumar (2005:162) indicates that:

“Sampling is a process of selecting units, for example people or organisations, from a population of interest so that by studying the sample it will enable the researcher to generalise the results back to the population from which they were chosen.”

Similarly, Bryman (2012:187) gives a definition of sampling as *“the segment of the population that is selected for investigation. It is the subset of the population.”* Dörnyei (2007:96) defines the sample as *“the group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation”*. Hallebone and Priest (2009) state that the sample, which is a part of a larger

population about whom the study is, should be consistent with the study's aims, the research questions, the method(s) or technique(s) used and the intended uses of the study's findings. Moreover, Robson (2002) indicates that a sample refers to a division of the population.

Figure 4: Population and samples



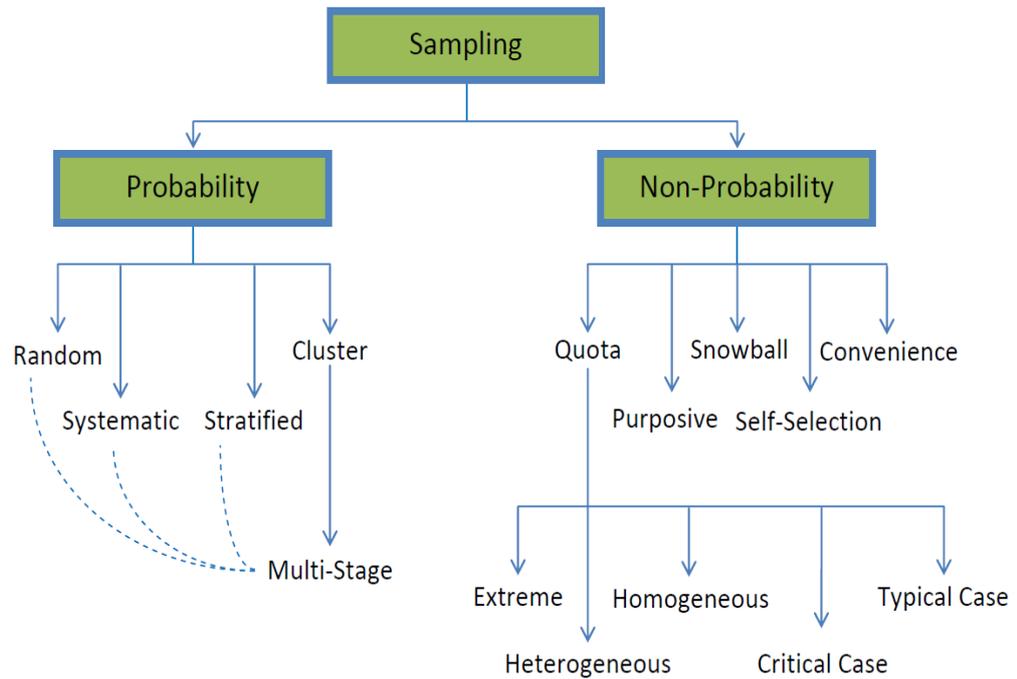
Source: (Punch: 2012)

May (2011), indicates that there are several types of sampling but all samples fall under either probability sampling or non-probability sampling. May (2011), states that only probability samples allow a statistical generalisation from the sample to the population. Probability sampling, also known as random sampling, can be defined as *“a sample that has been selected using random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected”* (Bryman, 2012:187), while Saunders et al., (2012:261) state that *“probability or representative sampling is associated with survey and experiment research strategies.”* The aim of using probability sampling is to keep sampling error to a minimum (Bryman 2012). As indicated by Gill and Johnson (2011), in order to generalise from a random sample and avoid sampling errors or biases, a random sample needs to be of an adequate size; large sample sizes reduce sampling errors. In contrast, for non-random

sampling, it is not necessary to have an equal probability of selection to each case, and the researcher usually selects the sample (Saunders et al., 2009). This type of sampling is usually typical with strategies such as case study or when the sampling cases are hard to identify (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

For the purpose of this, research the use of random sampling which is *“the selection of participants from the general population that the sample will represent. In most second language studies, the population is the group of all language learners, perhaps in a particular context”* (Mackey and Gass, 2008:119). According to Mackey and Gass (2008) second language researchers do not have access to the whole population. Therefore, they have to choose an accessible sample, which is a representative of the whole population. Sampling is selecting a convenient number who are members of a population that is being researched and should be chosen carefully to fit into the study. Therefore, in line with the aims and objectives of this study the sample was chosen randomly from the student population at Tripoli University, English Department where the whole population was targeted. The population size is approximately two thousand; therefore, three hundred and thirty-three is (15%), which can be considered as a representative sample and therefore sufficient for the purpose of the research.

Figure 5: the common sampling techniques and types



Source: Saunders, *et al.* (2009)

4.14.1 Sample size of this study

Data from positivist studies is considered valid, in terms of probability, if the sample size is sufficiently representative to generalise to the wider population (Gill and Johnson, 2011). The sample size depends mainly on the nature of the problem and the intention is to attain a maximum sample size, that will accurately represent the population being gauged (Kumar, 2005). Correspondingly, the number of responses was characterised as suitable because it fell into the acceptable level when referring to Yamen's formula as exhibited below:

Figure 6: Yamen's Formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n =sample size, N = population size, e =the error of sampling

(Usually 0.05). By applying this formula to the study population, 333 responses was the result of the formula as shown below:

$$\frac{2000}{1 + 2000 \times 0.0025} = 333.33$$

The representative sample size for this study is 333 participants but the researcher was able to collect 629 valid samples. The participants are Libyan University students studying English grammar at Tripoli University of varying ages and levels.

Table 14: Response rate

| Number of Questionnaires Distributed | Questionnaires Returned | Valid Questionnaires | Incomplete questionnaires | Response Rate |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1000 | 700 | 629 | 71 | 70% |

4.15 Population

Population is defined by Blaikie (2011:172) as “*an aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of criteria*”. Blaikie (2011) considers the population elements as single members or units of a certain population Blaikie (2011) points out that the researcher is free to define a population in whatever

way he sees appropriate to address the research question(s). Blaikie (2011) also states that a population could be the citizens of a particular country at a certain period of time or people of a certain age group.

4.15.1 The population and sample size of this study

The participants chosen for this study are categorised under two main groups as students who study at the English Department at Tripoli University for the quantitative data and lecturers who teach English grammar for the qualitative data. The students were selected randomly. Burns and Grove (2001) believe that there are no straightforward rules regarding the sample size but it should contain at least 30 respondents. Polit and Beck (2006), indicate that quantitative research requires large samples to increase representativeness and to reduce sampling error. The population chosen to represent the current study are students at Tripoli University who study in the English department. The justification for choosing Tripoli University over many universities in Libya is:

- It has a fair representation of students from different parts of Libya, being the largest and one of the highest ranked in that region.
- The students are from different parts of Libya where the levels of English vary from one area to another.
- Its accessibility to the researcher, who was a former undergraduate and MA student and worked there as an instructor for almost 12 years.

Dörnyei (2003) points out that what is essential for a probability sample is that a complete (or almost complete) list of the population exists. This list is known

as the sample frame or (sampling frame) from which a sample is randomly chosen. Each person in that frame is given a unique number beginning at number one and mathematically random number is then made (May 2011).

4.12 Pilot study

The pilot study is a very important device for researchers to assess their research tools. Burns (2000) explains that the purpose of the pilot study is not only to acquire data but also to learn how to acquire data properly and accurately. It helps researchers to discover weaknesses in their methodology.

Saunders et al. (2009:394) makes clear that:

“Prior to using your questionnaire to collect data it should be pilot tested...the purpose of the pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that the respondents will have no problem answering the questions and there will be no problem in recording the data.”

The pilot study was conducted for this research to test the feasibility of and to refine and modify the research tools. It was carried out to check for any ambiguity, confusion or inadequate wording in the questionnaire. A good piloting includes selecting a sample, negotiating access, delivering the instrument, calculating response rates and analysing the results in the same manner as expected for the final study (Gorard 2003). In other words, the questionnaire is pretested to determine that the questions are completely comprehended by the respondents, in order to ensure soundness and suitability of the research instruments (Sekaran 2003).

A preliminary questionnaire was designed and distributed to 25 students attending Tripoli University, Faculty of Languages, English Department, in order to ensure the wording and meanings were understandable in identifying the students' perceptions about grammar instruction. The respondents were informed of the aims of the pilot study and were asked to return the completed questionnaire. All the participants showed interest in the questionnaire. The 25 students who received a questionnaire answered all the questions. Some students thought the questionnaire was too long but they all agreed that the language used in the questionnaire was simple and comprehensible. The questionnaire contains 31 questions to find out the students' views about how grammar is taught Tripoli University, Faculty of Languages. The questionnaire has a Five-Point-Likert-Scale. All the responses ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The questions were grouped into four themes a) The role of grammar b) Difficulties concerning grammar c) Methods and techniques of teaching English grammar d) Error correction.

The data from the pilot questionnaire was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, and it was found that the Cronbach's Alpha for the overall questionnaire was 0.739. Therefore, the overall reliability co-efficient is more than 0.70 which means that there is good internal consistency of scale. It also suggests that the study instrument (questionnaire) fulfils the initial reliability criteria and therefore will be valid for the full investigation. Based on this former outcome, the researcher decided to proceed with the actual study. The following table 4.16 displays the Cronbach's Alpha of the pilot study.

Table 15: Cronbach's Alpha For the pilot study

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
| .739 | .786 | 31 |

Semi-structured interviews were used as an additional method to collect information and to support the findings from the questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff members at Tripoli University who teach grammar to provide opportunities for clarification, explanation and useful and in-depth information.

4.17. Data analysis of the questionnaire

In order to understand the collected data, it needs to be processed, analysed and interpreted (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The data which was collected from the questionnaire was coded by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 21) which is widely used to analyse data in quantitative research. To achieve the research objectives for the current study and answer the research questions, the researcher employed five analysis techniques to analyse the collected data. These tests are; descriptive statistics, the independent *t*-test, one-way Anova, Pearson Correlation and exploratory factor analysis. The descriptive analysis of the results will provide the frequency and percentages from the data collected. There are different types of *t*-tests available in SPSS. The one that is used in this study is an

independent sample *t*-test which is “*used when you want to compare the mean score, on some continuous variable, for two different groups of participants*” (Pallant, 2011:239). In addition, this test shows significant differences. If the value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column is equal or less than .05, this means that there is a significant difference in the mean score on the dependent variables for each of the two groups. On the other hand, if the value is above .05 than there is no significant difference between the groups (Pallant 2011).

4.12 Interviews

“The research interview is a prominent data collection tool in both quantitative and qualitative research”. Interview is defined by Payne and Payne (2004:129) as “*data collection in face-to-face settings, using an oral question-and-answer format*”. Saunders et al. (2012:680) define research interview as “*purposeful conversation between two or more people requiring the interviewer to establish rapport, to ask concise and unambiguous questions and to listen attentively*”, give another definition. Gray (2014:382) also states, “*Interviewing is a basic form of human activity, in which language is used between two human beings in the pursuit of cooperative inquiry*”. Punch (2005:168) points out that being one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research, the interview is “*a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality*”. Burton et al. (2014), maintain that interviews are very effective in educational research. Cohen et al. (2011) point out that there are many purposes of conducting interviews:

- 1) To test or develop a theory.
- 2) To evaluate or assess a person in some respect.

- 3) To gather data: and to sample respondent's opinions.

This study used the interviews to gather data about the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of grammar in foreign language teaching, how it is taught and how it should be taught in the Libyan context or whether it should be taught at all. How to conduct an interview depends on the accessibility of individuals, the cost, and the amount of time available. Creswell (2012) lists four types of interview approaches, which are:

- 1) One-on-one interviews, which is the most time-consuming and costly approach;
- 2) Focus group interviews, which is used to collect shared understanding from several individuals and to get views from specific people;
- 3) Telephone interviews, which is used when the participants are geographically dispersed;
- 4) E-mail interviews, which can also be used when the participants are geographically dispersed.

Cohen et al. (2007) consider interviews to be a conversation between the interviewer and the lecturer to obtain relevant information. According to Walliman (2006), there are two types of questions in an interview:

- 1) Closed format questions from which the respondents must choose from a choice of given answers. The advantages and disadvantages of this type are listed in table 19 below.

Table 16: Advantages and disadvantages of closed-formatted questions

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|
| They are quick to answer | There is a limited range of possible answers |
| They are easy to code | It is not possible to qualify answers |
| They require no special writing skills from respondents | |

Source (Walliman 2006)

2) Open format questions where the respondents are free to answer in their own words and style. The following table displays the advantages and disadvantages of this type.

Table 17: Advantages and disadvantages of open-formatted questions

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|
| They permit freedom of expressions | They are more demanding and time consuming for the respondents |
| Respondents can qualify their responses | They are difficult to code |
| Bias is eliminated because respondents are free to answer in their own way. | Respondents' answers are open to the researcher's interpretation |

Source (Walliman 2006)

The interview in this study are made up of both closed-formatted questions; which are used for the demographic data, while open-formatted questions; are used for the rest of the questions in the interview. Some of the interview questions; have been adopted from the literature and other questions; have been made by the researcher according to the research objectives and research context. Dawson (2002) indicates that different interview methods

exist, such as the “unstructured interview, structured interviews and semi-structured interview which will be discussed in the following sections.

4.18.1 Unstructured Interviews

The unstructured type of interview allows the interviewer to pose some open-ended questions and the lecturer to express his/her own opinion freely. This requires both the interviewer and the lecturer to be at ease because it is like a discussion or brainstorming on the given topic. The direction of the interview is determined by both the lecturer and interviewer, not predetermined. According to Walliman (2006), unstructured interviews are a flexible format, usually based on a question guide but where the format remains the choice of the interviewer who can allow the interview to ramble in order to get insights into the attitude of the lecturer and closed format questions are used. Preece *et al.* (2015), argue that unstructured interviews make it difficult to standardise the interview across different lecturers, because each interview takes on its own format. Yet, it is likely to generate fruitful data, information and ideas in these conversations because the type of questioning can be altered to suit the context. In addition, the interviewer can question the lecturer more deeply on specific issues as they arise; nevertheless, it can be very time consuming and difficult to analyse the data.

4.18.2 Structured interviews

In structured interviews, the interviewer uses a set of predetermined questions, which are short and clearly worded; in most cases, these questions are closed

and therefore, require precise answers in the form of a set of options read out or presented on paper. This type of interviewing is easy to conduct, and can be easily standardised as the same questions are asked to all participants.

4.18.3 Semi-structured interviews

Bryman (2012:212) defines a semi- structured interview as a term that covers a wide range of instances. *“It typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions.”* This method of interview has features of both structured and unstructured interviews and therefore use both closed and open questions. Therefore, it has the advantage of both methods of interview. In order to be consistent with all participants, the interviewer has a set of pre-planned core questions for guidance such that the same areas are covered with each lecturer. As the interview progresses, the lecturer is given opportunity to elaborate or provide more relevant information if s/he chooses to do so. Compared to questionnaires, interviews are more flexible and adaptable, because the questions can be adjusted to fit the situation. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit information about teachers’ perceptions and knowledge of grammar teaching, and the difficulties facing their practice.

For this study, the interviews targeted all the lecturers who taught and are still teaching English grammar in the English Department at Tripoli University. The interviews that were completed at Tripoli University were semi-structured and

were conducted by using messenger, although the researcher intended to do the interviews face to face, the current turmoil in Libya prevented the researcher from visiting Libya for safety reasons. The researcher also tried to use skype or viber but because the Internet connections were disrupted and often reception is weak, it was difficult to converse with the respondents. Therefore, the most suitable way for the interview to take place was through Facebook messenger. After gaining permission from the head of the English Language department at Tripoli University, the participants were contacted through a friend and colleague at the department who gave, those interested in participating in the study, the researcher's contact details. The researcher faced major difficulties in getting in touch with the participants because of the blackouts and the poor internet connection. Therefore, the questions were typed into Facebook messenger and the participants replied when they had access to the internet. The researcher then reviewed the responses and asked more questions when new themes emerged from the participants' responses. Although the process was difficult and time consuming, the researcher received the qualitative data needed for the study.

The interview questions were stimulated from the literature on how the teachers perceived the importance of grammar in teaching English at Tripoli University; how they taught grammar and the difficulties, they face in the teaching of grammar. The interviews were conducted in the English language, as the lecturers were quite proficient in the English language.

There are many ways of analysing interviews including: Thematic analysis, Comparative analysis, Content analysis, and Discourse analysis (Dawson, 2009). The analysis of the interviews for this research will be through content analysis, which is defined by Dawson (2009:122) as a *“method where the researcher systematically works through each transcript assigning codes, which may be numbers or words, to specific characteristics within the text”*. Therefore, in this case the first step in content analysis is to conceptualise the data, then group them into meaningful categories, and then identify them into themes to explain the data. The content analysis consisted of several iterations. First, an attempt was made to establish patterns in the data by grouping together closely related items. Then, in order to ensure reliability in coding the qualitative data, the supervisor and two colleagues read all the coded data and validated the individual coding of all thirteen lecturers. In most cases, they all agreed with each other and with the original coding.

The following table 18 shows the advantages and disadvantages of the interview as claimed by Kumar (2014).

Table 18: Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|--|
| More appropriate for complex situations; The interviewer has the chance to prepare the respondent before asking sensitive questions and to explain complex ones in person | Time-consuming and expensive; This is When potential respondents are scattered over a wide geographical area. |
| Useful for collecting in depth information: In an interview situation, it is possible for the interviewer to obtain in-depth information by probing. | The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interaction; in an interview, the quality of interaction between the interviewer and lecturer is likely to affect the quality of the information obtained. In addition, because the interaction in each interview is unique, the quality of the responses obtained from different interviews may vary significantly. |
| Information can be Supplemented; An interviewer is able to supplement information obtained from responses with those gained from observation of non-verbal reactions. | The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interviewer. In an interview, the quality of the data generated is affected by the experience, skills and commitment of the interviewer |
| Questions can be explained; it is less likely that a question will be misunderstood as the interviewer can either repeat a question or put it in a form that is understood by the respondent | The quality of data may vary when multiple interviews are used. The use of multiple interviews may magnify the problems identified in the previous two points. |
| Has a wider application; An interview can be used with almost any type of population | Possibility of researcher bias. In an interview situation, a researchers' bias either in the framing of questions or the interpretation of responses obtained is always possible. If a person or persons, paid or voluntary, other than the researcher, conduct the interviews it is also possible that they may exhibit bias in the way they interpret responses, select response categories or choose words to summarise respondents' expressed words. |

Source: (Kumar 2014)

4.13 Ethical Considerations

When conducting any research, it is crucial to consider the ethical implications of the research. Ethics play an important role for getting access to people and organisations for gathering data for the study (Saunders et al., 2009). In addition, being ethical is a core requirement of an evaluation to determine

whether the study should go ahead (Kumar, 2005). According to Punch (2006), it is important to determine the ethical dimensions of any research before conducting it. Greener (2011) regards ethical research as complying with predefined codes. According to Kumar (2014), the ethical codes direct the manner in which a service is delivered. He further discusses the concept of ethics as being changeable from profession to profession, but it is always considered unethical to cause harm to individuals, use information improperly or introduce bias. When conducting research, researchers have to be aware of the ethical issues that are related to their studies.

Kumar (2014), points out that the stakeholders in a research activity are; the participants, the researcher and the funding body. Some of the ethical issues that are related to research participants are seeking informed consent and maintaining confidentiality. Some of the unethical issues that the researcher must avoid are introducing bias into the research activity, using inappropriate research methodology, incorrect reporting of the findings, and inappropriate use of information.

Gray (2014) lists four main areas of ethical principles: avoiding harm to participants, ensuring informed consent of participants, respecting the privacy of participants, and avoiding the use of deception.

The researcher should also adopt an ethical code and deal with the collected data in a sensitive manner, because the researcher enters the participants'

lives (McNeill and Chapman 2005). Moreover, it has to be considered that ethical issues may give rise to a clash between professional and personal interest in the piece of research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

The ethical issues of this study has been evaluated by the Research Ethics Committee at Liverpool John Moores University based on, the ethical codes of practice guide in the university. Gaining ethical approval by this committee is required before collecting the data for either pilot or main study, and has been approved for this study. Considering the ethical issues will increase the reliability and credibility of the study (Saunders et al., 2009). It will also maximise the level of trust between the researcher and the participants (Jankowicz, 2000).

Access to the University was granted by the head of the English Language department as the researcher is a lecturer at the department and has been granted a scholarship from the university to conduct the study. A participant information sheet containing information about the title of the study, who is conducting it, the purpose of the study and whether they have to participate or not in addition to a consent form, which they needed to sign, was provided with the questionnaires to all the participants.

4.14 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology, the research design, and the methods applied in this study in order to achieve the objectives of the research and answer the research questions effectively. It has also provided justification

for the decisions made at every stage. This research has adopted a mixed method approach to identify the students' and lecturers' views on the teaching and learning of English grammar. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. For the collection of the data, a questionnaire was applied in order to reach as many participants as possible and to ensure that the findings are reliable. Semi- structured interviews were chosen to find out the lecturers' views towards grammar and the difficulties they face when they teach it. The researcher had highlighted the tests appropriate for this study in order to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions.

A suitable sample size was calculated using Yamane's formula, which is a framework that could be considered suitable for determining an appropriate sample size. The proper sample size required for this study was three hundred and thirty-three but the researcher was able to collect 629 responses from Tripoli University. The next chapter will present the data analysis chapter and findings of these samples after coding them into the SPSS software.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical study showing the findings from the data collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in line with the methodology and methods discussed in Chapter Four. The purpose of data analysis is to answer the research questions and to help determine the trends and relationship among variables. The rationale is to present the findings of the output of the questionnaire using SPSS and present the key themes from the semi-structured interviews to gauge the perceptions of lecturers at Tripoli University English Department.

5.1 The analysis of the quantitative data

A questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection to elicit students' attitudes and beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of English grammar. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions asking respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with a particular statement.

A total of one thousand questionnaires were administered by colleagues to a large scale number of students involving Tripoli University students of different levels from the English Department.

Table 19: Response Rate

| Number of Questionnaires Distributed | Questionnaires Returned | Valid Questionnaires | Incomplete questionnaires | Response Rate |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1000 | 700 | 629 | 71 | 70% |

5.2 Demographic Data Analysis of the Research Participants:

The first part of the questionnaire is concerned with the demographic data of the participants such as gender, age group, and level of study. The following data, which are displayed in pie figures, show the background information of the respondents of this study as follows:

5.2.1. Respondents' gender

Figure 7: Participants' gender

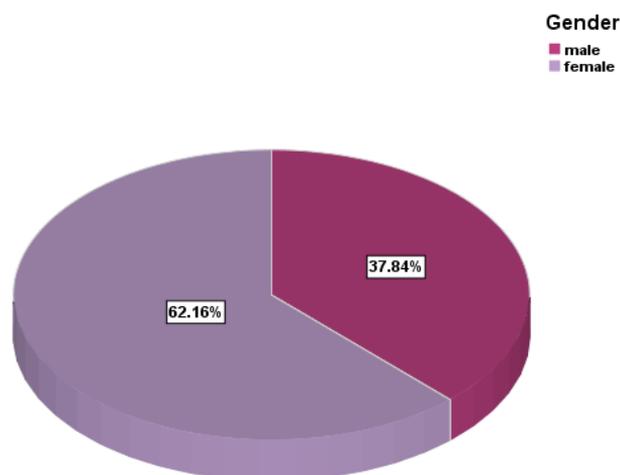


Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of the participants classified by gender. Among the six hundred and twenty-nine respondents, two hundred and thirty-eight participants are male (38%), and three hundred and ninety-one are female (62%). This suggests that the number of female students that study at the English department exceeds male students in general. This reflects the norm as there are more female students doing languages than males at the university.

5.2.2 Respondents' age

The age of the respondents was identified within the English Department and was categorised into four age groups.

Figure 8: Respondents' age

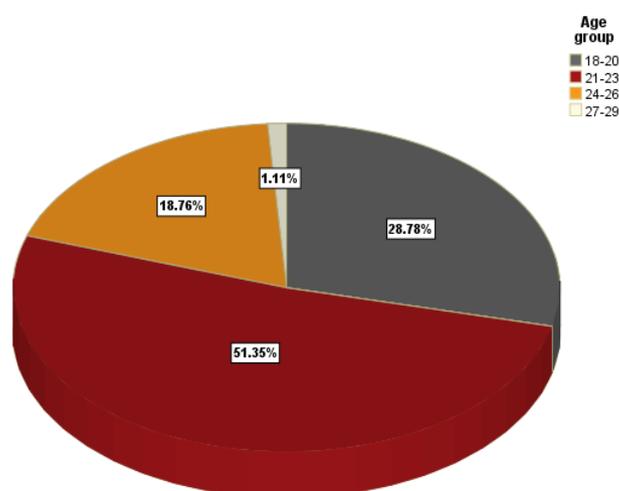
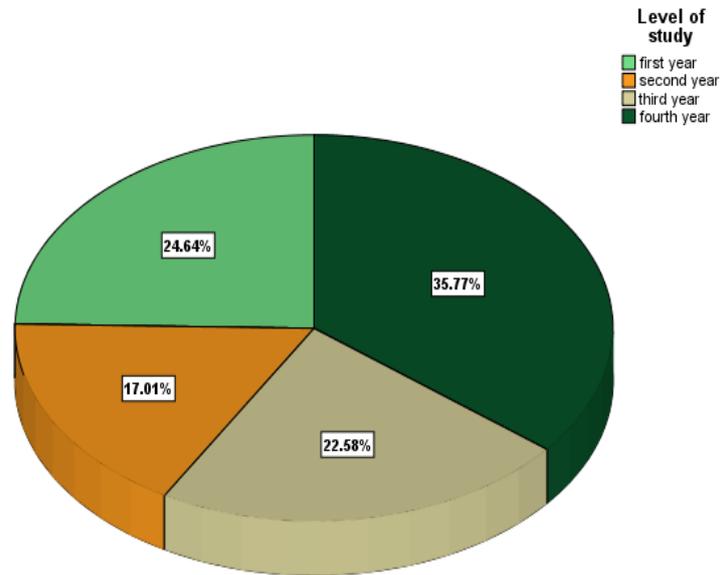


Figure 5.2 demonstrates the four different age groups. Group 1 has one hundred eighty-one (29%) students who are aged between 18 and 20; in group 2 three hundred twenty-three (51%) are aged between 21 and 23; in the third group (19%) or one hundred and eighteen are aged between 24 and 26, while in the smallest group, seven (1%) are 27 and over. The figure above suggests that the student population at Tripoli University English language department is within the expected age range, which is from 18-23.

5.2.3 Respondents' level of study

The level of study at Tripoli University can be classified into four different levels.

Figure 9: Respondents' level of study



The frequency and percentage for the level of study were analysed. As evident in Figure 5.3, among the six hundred and twenty-nine participants, one hundred and fifty-five (25%) are first year students. One hundred and seven (17%) are in second year signifying the least number of participants in the group. One hundred and forty-two (23%) are in their third year, while two hundred and twenty-five (36%) students are in their fourth year representing the largest group.

Table 20: Cross tabulation of level of study, gender and age

| Level of study | | | Age group | | | | Total |
|----------------|--------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | 18-20 | 21-23 | 24-26 | 27-29 | |
| First Year | gender | male | 48 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 66 |
| | | female | 65 | 22 | 2 | 0 | 89 |
| | Total | | 113 | 38 | 4 | 0 | 155 |
| Second Year | gender | male | 27 | 21 | 1 | 0 | 49 |
| | | female | 30 | 26 | 1 | 1 | 58 |
| | Total | | 57 | 47 | 2 | 1 | 107 |
| Third Year | gender | male | 1 | 41 | 6 | 0 | 48 |
| | | female | 10 | 80 | 4 | 0 | 94 |
| | Total | | 11 | 121 | 10 | 0 | 142 |
| Fourth Year | gender | male | 0 | 36 | 37 | 2 | 75 |
| | | female | 1 | 79 | 66 | 4 | 150 |
| | Total | | 1 | 115 | 103 | 6 | 225 |
| Total | gender | male | 76 | 114 | 46 | 2 | 238 |
| | | female | 106 | 207 | 73 | 5 | 391 |
| | Total | | 182 | 321 | 119 | 7 | 629 |

The table above displays a cross tabulation of the level of study and gender of the respondents related to their age. The vast majority of respondents (321 students) are between the ages 21-23 of whom 207 are females and 76 are males. The highest rate of female respondents according to the age group 21-23 are in Year 3 (80 females) and Year 4 (79 females). Only 7 respondents are between the ages 27-29. Of the seven respondents, five are females, four in Year 4 and one in Year 2 whereas two are males who are in Year 4.

5.3 Cronbach's coefficient alpha

The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha reliability test for the students' questionnaire achieved .845, which is above 0.70 as indicated in Table 3 below. The results specify that there is good consistency in the scale data. It can therefore be assumed from the results that further parametric or non-parametric analysis can be conducted.

Table 21: Reliability statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | No. of items |
|------------------|--------------|
| .845 | 31 |

5.4 Statistic analysis of the questionnaire

Part two of the questionnaire consists of a Likert type scale in which the respondents had to indicate their agreement or disagreement in relation with different statements about learning and teaching grammar. The questionnaire is divided into four constructs. The first construct is concerned with the importance of grammar, the second construct is about the students' difficulties with learning grammar, the third deals with the teaching and learning of grammar, whereas the fourth construct gauges the students' responses towards error correction.

The first type of statistical tests are descriptive tests, which determine the mean score, standard deviation and standard error mean of each response. Any mean score above three demonstrates the participants' agreement with the given statement, whereas any score below three indicates the participants' disagreement with the given statements.

5.5 Construct one (The role of grammar)

The first construct of the questionnaire consists of seven statements as shown below in Table 5.4. The statements in this construct aim to find out the place of grammar in the language-learning programme according to each participant. The table below provides a descriptive analysis of the participants' responses.

Table 22: Role of grammar

| No. | Statement | Number of Respondents | means | Standard deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Grammar is an important part of learning English | 629 | 3.54 | 1.618 | .065 |
| 2 | Learning grammar can help improve my writing | 629 | 3.34 | 1.655 | .066 |
| 3 | Learning grammar can enhance my speaking skills | 629 | 3.38 | 1.474 | .059 |
| 4 | Knowing grammar helps me understand the meaning of words when I read | 629 | 3.17 | 1.316 | .052 |
| 5 | Grammar should not be an important part of learning English | 629 | 3.32 | 1.575 | .063 |
| 6 | I enjoy learning grammar | 629 | 2.38 | 1.259 | .050 |
| 7 | Learning English is mostly about learning grammar | 629 | 2.19 | 1.112 | .044 |
| Overall means of construct A | | 629 | 3.0463 | 1.04820 | .04179 |
| SCALE: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: neutral 4: agree 5: strongly agree | | | | | |

The overall mean of the whole construct (which is 3.0463) indicates that the students showed mixed reactions but broadly speaking, they viewed grammar to be a vital part of second language learning. The statement: *Learning English is mostly about learning grammar* received the lowest mean of (2.19) which indicates that a majority of the participants disagreed with this statement whereas the highest mean score in the above construct (3.54) was recorded for the statement *Grammar is an important part of learning English*. Therefore, from the findings above it can be concluded that most of the students do recognise the importance of learning grammar and its role in enhancing speaking and writing. However, at the same time the responses suggest that many of the students do not enjoy learning grammar.

Table 23: Grammar is an important part of learning English

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English | Strongly Disagree | 38 | 25% | 20 | 19% | 40 | 28% | 25 | 11% | 123 | 20% |
| | Disagree | 21 | 14% | 28 | 26% | 21 | 15% | 22 | 10% | 92 | 15% |
| | Neutral | 4 | 3% | 10 | 9% | 4 | 3% | 2 | 1% | 20 | 3% |
| | Agree | 35 | 23% | 16 | 15% | 12 | 8% | 48 | 21% | 111 | 18% |
| | Strongly Agree | 57 | 37% | 33 | 31% | 65 | 46% | 128 | 57% | 283 | 45% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The above table shows the frequency and percentage of the students' responses to the statement *Grammar is an important part of learning English* according to each academic year. The results indicate that 78% of fourth year

students think that grammar is an important part of learning English. Moreover, 54% in year 3, 46% in year 2 and 60% in year 1 also agreed with the given statement.

Table 24: Learning grammar can help improve my writing

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Learning grammar can help improve my writing | Strongly Disagree | 39 | 25% | 38 | 36% | 42 | 30% | 32 | 14% | 151 | 24% |
| | Disagree | 31 | 20% | 13 | 12% | 34 | 24% | 19 | 8% | 97 | 15% |
| | Neutral | 1 | 1% | 7 | 7% | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% | 9 | 1% |
| | Agree | 35 | 23% | 11 | 10% | 14 | 10% | 72 | 32% | 132 | 21% |
| | Strongly Agree | 49 | 32% | 38 | 36% | 51 | 36% | 102 | 45% | 240 | 38% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The results in Table 5.6 reveal that 55% of year 1 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *learning grammar can help improve my writing* whereas 54% of year 3 students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and believe that grammar does not improve their writing. While 77% of Year 4 students agreed or strongly agreed with the given statement.

Table 25: Learning grammar can enhance my speaking

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Learning grammar can enhance my speaking | Strongly Disagree | 29 | 19% | 12 | 11% | 22 | 15% | 26 | 12% | 89 | 14% |
| | Disagree | 33 | 21% | 39 | 36% | 54 | 38% | 24 | 11% | 150 | 24% |
| | Neutral | 2 | 1% | 3 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 5 | 2% | 11 | 2% |
| | Agree | 41 | 26% | 29 | 27% | 40 | 28% | 78 | 35% | 188 | 30% |
| | Strongly Agree | 50 | 32% | 24 | 22% | 25 | 18% | 92 | 41% | 191 | 30% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As Table 5.4.3 shows, 60% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that grammar can enhance their speaking but only 38% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed. The table above also indicates that 51% of year 1 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that learning grammar helps their speaking while 40% of them disagreed. Year 2 responses were not much different from those in Year One. However more than half 53% of the respondents in year 3 did not consider that grammar had a role in speaking and only 46% agreed with the statement indicated in the above table. In contrast, according to year 4, 76% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the effect grammar has on speaking whereas only 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 26: Knowing grammar helps understand the meaning of words

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Knowing grammar helps me understand the meaning of words when I read | Strongly Disagree | 31 | 20% | 17 | 16% | 28 | 20% | 14 | 6% | 90 | 14% |
| | Disagree | 36 | 23% | 34 | 32% | 49 | 35% | 39 | 17% | 158 | 25% |
| | Neutral | 4 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 0% | 6 | 1% |
| | Agree | 69 | 45% | 30 | 28% | 56 | 39% | 149 | 66% | 304 | 48% |
| | Strongly Agree | 15 | 10% | 26 | 24% | 8 | 6% | 22 | 10% | 71 | 11% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As it is apparent in Table 5.4.4, out of the 629 respondents 59% agreed or strongly agreed that: Knowing grammar helps me understand the meaning of words when I read while only 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The table also shows that year 1 55%, year 2, 52% and 76% of year 4 either agreed or strongly agreed that communication is possible without a good command of grammar. The highest disagreement rate was found in year 3 55% who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement above. The above conflicting views are understandable because the learning and teaching of grammar does not generate consensus. Different stakeholders have different views.

Table 27: I enjoy learning English Grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I enjoy learning English grammar | strongly disagree | 42 | 27% | 26 | 24% | 62 | 44% | 58 | 26% | 188 | 30% |
| | disagree | 64 | 41% | 47 | 44% | 44 | 31% | 72 | 32% | 227 | 36% |
| | neutral | 6 | 4% | 8 | 7% | 4 | 3% | 8 | 4% | 26 | 4% |
| | agree | 38 | 25% | 20 | 19% | 27 | 19% | 79 | 35% | 164 | 26% |
| | strongly agree | 5 | 3% | 6 | 6% | 5 | 4% | 8 | 4% | 24 | 4% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The results in Table 5.9 indicate that a large number of respondents disagreed with the statement regarding how they feel about grammar. As evident from the table, 68% of year 1, 68% of year 2, 75% of year 3 and 58% of year 4 either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I enjoy learning grammar*. These results show that more than half the respondents 66% in all the year levels are not very keen about learning grammar, whereas only 31% of all the respondents say that, they enjoy learning grammar. This clearly highlights that grammar is not very popular among the majority of the student population.

5.6 Construct two (Difficulties with grammar)

The second construct consists of six statements, which gauge the difficulties students face because of their lack of grammar knowledge. The results below indicate that generally speaking, a high proportion of the students agree with the statements illustrated in the construct with an overall mean of (3.6335).

Table 28: Difficulties with grammar

| No. | Question | Number of Respondents | Mean | Standard Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | I would rather not speak in English than risk making mistakes | 629 | 4.00 | 1.195 | .048 |
| 2 | L2 grammar is difficult to learn because it is different from my L1 | 629 | 3.23 | 1.293 | .052 |
| 3 | I find it difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I write. | 629 | 3.86 | 1.167 | .047 |
| 4 | It is difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language | 629 | 4.00 | 1.160 | .046 |
| 5 | It is difficult to become a fluent speaker without knowing a lot of grammar | 629 | 3.36 | 1.678 | .067 |
| 6 | It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without having accurate grammar | 629 | 3.33 | 1.408 | .047 |
| Overall means of construct B | | 629 | 3.6335 | .95450 | .03806 |
| SCALE: 1:strongly disagree 2:disagree 3:neutral 4:agree 5:strongly agree | | | | | |

The two statements to which the respondents strongly agreed on are; *I would rather not speak in class rather than risk making mistakes* with a mean score of 4.00 and the statement; *it is difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I write in the English language* which also displayed a mean score of 4.00.

Table 29: I would rather not speak in English in class

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I would rather not speak in English in class so that I don't make mistakes | strongly disagree | 9 | 6% | 3 | 3% | 5 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 19 | 3% |
| | disagree | 20 | 13% | 18 | 17% | 26 | 18% | 43 | 19% | 107 | 17% |
| | neutral | 6 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 2% | 6 | 3% | 15 | 2% |
| | agree | 45 | 29% | 33 | 31% | 38 | 27% | 89 | 40% | 205 | 33% |
| | strongly agree | 75 | 48% | 53 | 50% | 70 | 49% | 85 | 38% | 283 | 45% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As evident in Table 32, the overall percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I would rather not speak in English in class so that I do not make mistakes* is 78%. The results show that 77% percent of Year 1 respondents', 81% of year 2, 76% of year 3 and 78% of year 4, either all agreed or strongly agreed with the given statement above. This percentage leaves only a minority of the respondents 19% year 1, 20% year 2, 22% year 3 and 20% year 4 who do not consider it hard to speak English in class. This could be due to the fear of the students feeling intimidated or of being criticised in front of other students in class.

Table 30: Learning English grammar is difficult

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| learning English grammar is difficult because it is different from Arabic grammar | strongly disagree | 23 | 15% | 20 | 19% | 26 | 18% | 14 | 6% | 83 | 13% |
| | disagree | 29 | 19% | 35 | 33% | 47 | 33% | 39 | 17% | 150 | 24% |
| | neutral | 7 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 0% | 9 | 1% |
| | agree | 69 | 45% | 39 | 36% | 59 | 42% | 149 | 66% | 316 | 50% |
| | strongly agree | 27 | 17% | 13 | 12% | 9 | 6% | 22 | 10% | 71 | 11% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The results in Table 33 show that out of the 155 respondents in year 1, 34% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *learning English grammar is difficult because it is different from Arabic grammar* while 62% agreed with the statement that the difference between English and Arabic grammar contributed to the difficulty. Out of the 107 respondents in year 2, 52% of them disagreed while only 48% agreed with the statement above, whereas, 51% of the 142 respondents in year 3 and 23% of the 225 respondents in year 4 disagree or strongly disagree with the statement listed in the table above. Only 48% in Year 3 and 76% in year 4 agreed or strongly agreed that the difference between English and Arabic grammar causes difficulty in learning.

Table 31: I find it difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I write

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| It is difficult to use my grammar to write in the English language | strongly disagree | 4 | 3% | 4 | 4% | 7 | 5% | 5 | 2% | 20 | 3% |
| | disagree | 24 | 15% | 17 | 16% | 21 | 15% | 38 | 17% | 100 | 16% |
| | neutral | 19 | 12% | 10 | 9% | 12 | 8% | 16 | 7% | 57 | 9% |
| | agree | 41 | 26% | 45 | 42% | 42 | 30% | 94 | 42% | 222 | 35% |
| | strongly agree | 67 | 43% | 31 | 29% | 60 | 42% | 72 | 32% | 230 | 37% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As it is clear in the table 34 above, most of the students, 72% across the different levels agreed or strongly agreed (69% year 1, 71% year 2, 72% year 3, and 74% year 4) that putting their grammatical knowledge into use is difficult when they write in the English language. Only 18% in year 1, 20% in year 2, 20% in year 3 and 19% in year 4 disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement listed above. These findings show that only a minority of the students feel that they are capable of putting their grammatical knowledge into practical use when they write in the English language.

Table 32: I find it hard to use my grammar when I speak

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I find it hard to use my grammar when I speak in the English language | strongly disagree | 2 | 1% | 3 | 3% | 5 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 12 | 2% |
| | disagree | 25 | 16% | 18 | 17% | 26 | 18% | 43 | 19% | 112 | 18% |
| | neutral | 6 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 2% | 6 | 3% | 15 | 2% |
| | agree | 56 | 36% | 33 | 31% | 38 | 27% | 89 | 40% | 216 | 34% |
| | strongly agree | 66 | 43% | 53 | 50% | 70 | 49% | 85 | 38% | 274 | 44% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Table 35 above reveals that more than half the students 78% who participated in the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; *I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language*. The above table displays that 79% in year 1, 81% in year 2, 76% in year 3 and 78% in year 4. All agree or strongly agree with the given statement. The responses of the participants in year 1 and year 2 denote that they had more difficulties in using their grammar knowledge when they speak, than the other year groups. Only 20% out of the 629 participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements above. The findings show that the students who have difficulty with using their grammar when they speak exceeds the number of students who have difficulty with using their grammar when they write.

Table 33: it is difficult to become a fluent speaker without grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| It is difficult to become a fluent speaker without knowing a lot of grammar | strongly disagree | 47 | 30% | 41 | 38% | 41 | 29% | 28 | 12% | 157 | 25% |
| | disagree | 22 | 14% | 19 | 18% | 29 | 20% | 19 | 8% | 89 | 14% |
| | neutral | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 0% |
| | agree | 39 | 25% | 19 | 18% | 15 | 11% | 60 | 27% | 133 | 21% |
| | strongly agree | 46 | 30% | 27 | 25% | 56 | 39% | 118 | 52% | 247 | 39% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Overall, the percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with the statement given above is 60% but only 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed. With reference to the results above, 79% of year 4 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *it is difficult to become a fluent speaker without knowing a lot of grammar*. It is evident from the table that it contrasts to the other levels, year 4 respondents displayed the highest agreement rate to the given statement, whereas 56% of year 2 respondents represented the lowest agreement rate with the statement concerning fluency and grammar knowledge.

Table 34: It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after the grammar lesson

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English | strongly disagree | 29 | 19% | 16 | 15% | 23 | 16% | 21 | 9% | 89 | 14% |
| | disagree | 25 | 16% | 37 | 35% | 52 | 37% | 27 | 12% | 141 | 22% |
| | neutral | 1 | 1% | 9 | 8% | 1 | 1% | 5 | 2% | 16 | 3% |
| | agree | 60 | 39% | 32 | 30% | 47 | 33% | 99 | 44% | 238 | 38% |
| | strongly agree | 40 | 26% | 13 | 12% | 19 | 13% | 73 | 32% | 145 | 23% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The table above illustrates that, a little over half 61% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that being more accurate in their grammar would make them more confident when they speak in the English language. The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed most with the statement *“It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after learning the grammatical rules”* were fourth Year students (76%), whereas Year One participants (60%) agreed or strongly agreed. However, the students who disagreed or strongly disagreed were in Year three (53%) and Year Two (50%) which shows some contradiction between the year groups where students in their final years understand the need for communicative activities, which is quite rational owing to the fact that they have been learning grammar for almost three to four years at university. On the other hand, first year students agree on the need for communicative activities, whereas Year Two students disagree.

5.7 Construct three (Methods and techniques of teaching grammar)

The third construct contains 15 items, all of which reflect the students' views about the teaching and learning of grammar. The overall mean (3.5326) of the construct below shows that the respondents more or less agree with the items in the construct as a whole. This indicates that to some extent the students realise that the way they are taught grammar is not beneficial for them. This also shows that the students do have an idea of what grammar method or approach would best suit their learning styles.

As can be noticed from the table 35 below, the statement which has the highest mean score (4.30) and which the respondents agreed on most is: *I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups in order to practise the grammar rules I learned.* The respondents also strongly agreed on the item number 4 in the figure above; *the way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it,* with a mean score of 4.27.

Furthermore, the statement; *the grammar teacher should provide us with the grammar rules in order to apply them to the given exercises,* had a mean score of 4.25 which indicates that a large number of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement mentioned above. This means that the influence of the grammar of the first language (L1) is still strong in which teaching is done in a traditional way. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement *English grammar rules should be explained in Arabic whereas exercises should be done in English* with a mean score of 2.15

Table 35: Methods and Techniques

| No. | Statement | No of Respondent | Mean | Std. Devia. | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|------------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1 | integrate grammar into all the different classes where different communicative skills are taught (speaking, listening, reading and writing) | 629 | 4.01 | 1.174 | .047 |
| 2 | Grammar should be taught gradually from primary to university levels | 629 | 4.13 | 1.120 | .045 |
| 3 | Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar | 629 | 2.44 | 1.275 | .051 |
| 4 | The way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it. | 629 | 4.27 | .970 | .039 |
| 5 | Teachers should involve students in different grammar activities so that they participate in the lesson | 629 | 4.29 | .988 | .039 |
| 6 | it is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar | 629 | 3.13 | 1.438 | .057 |
| 7 | The grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar. | 629 | 2.85 | 1.439 | .060 |
| 8 | The grammar teacher should provide us with the grammar rules in order to apply them to the given exercises | 629 | 4.25 | .996 | .040 |
| 9 | I prefer that the rules are explained in English, then translated to Arabic | 629 | 3.29 | 1.297 | .052 |
| 10 | I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups | 629 | 4.30 | .942 | .038 |
| 11 | I prefer to learn grammar through reading, listening and speaking | 629 | 3.68 | 1.277 | .051 |
| 12 | Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson where the main focus is learning structures of words and sentences | 629 | 4.26 | .887 | .035 |
| 13 | English grammar rules should be explained in Arabic whereas exercises should be done in English. | 629 | 2.15 | 1.220 | .049 |
| 14 | Grammar can be acquired through exposure to language without the need to learn rules | 629 | 2.41 | 1.252 | .050 |
| 15 | My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language | 629 | 3.87 | 1.035 | .041 |
| OVERALL MEAN OF CONSTRUCT | | 629 | 3.5326 | .44914 | .01791 |
| SCALE: 1: strongly disagree 2: disagree 3: neutral 4: agree 5: strongly agree | | | | | |

The respondents also disagreed with the statement *Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar* with a mean of 2.44.

This means that the learners do have a sense of what is effective for them and what is not when they learn English.

Table 36: integrated grammar with all the different communicative skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing)

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| integrating grammar in all the different skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) | strongly disagree | 3 | 2% | 3 | 3% | 5 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 13 | 2% |
| | disagree | 26 | 17% | 18 | 17% | 26 | 18% | 43 | 19% | 113 | 18% |
| | neutral | 3 | 2% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 2% | 6 | 3% | 12 | 2% |
| | agree | 46 | 30% | 33 | 31% | 38 | 27% | 89 | 40% | 206 | 33% |
| | strongly agree | 77 | 50% | 53 | 50% | 70 | 49% | 85 | 38% | 285 | 45% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The results in table 36 above show that the overall percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement above are 78% and only 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is evident from the table that 80% of Year 1, 81% of Year 2, 76% of Year 3 and 78% of Year 4 respondents agree or strongly agree that grammar should be integrated with all the other skills. This outcome of the findings in the table above shows that the majority of respondents across the Year levels agreed or strongly agreed with integrating grammar into all the skills, with Year 1 having the lowest percentage of all the year groups who agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 37: Grammar should be taught gradually from primary levels

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Grammar should be taught gradually from primary to university levels | strongly disagree | 13 | 8% | 8 | 7% | 7 | 5% | 5 | 2% | 33 | 5% |
| | disagree | 18 | 12% | 10 | 9% | 5 | 4% | 19 | 8% | 52 | 8% |
| | neutral | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 1 | 0% | 5 | 1% |
| | agree | 58 | 37% | 42 | 39% | 55 | 39% | 96 | 43% | 251 | 40% |
| | strongly agree | 65 | 42% | 46 | 43% | 73 | 51% | 104 | 46% | 288 | 46% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The Table 37 shows that out of 629 participants, the majority 86% agreed or strongly agreed with teaching grammar from primary through to university whereas only 14% of the whole population disagreed or strongly disagreed. According to the Year groups, 79% of Year 1 respondents, 82% of Year 2, 90% of Year 3 and 89% Year 4 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement above. It is also evident that Year 3 09% and Year 4 10% participants represent the lowest disagreement rate among the four year groups.

Table 38: Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar.

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar. | strongly disagree | 32 | 21% | 32 | 30% | 44 | 31% | 63 | 28% | 171 | 27% |
| | disagree | 73 | 47% | 47 | 44% | 57 | 40% | 64 | 28% | 241 | 38% |
| | neutral | 4 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 1% | 10 | 4% | 15 | 2% |
| | agree | 33 | 21% | 24 | 22% | 37 | 26% | 78 | 35% | 172 | 27% |
| | strongly agree | 13 | 8% | 4 | 4% | 3 | 2% | 10 | 4% | 30 | 5% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The findings in Table 38 reveal that out of the 629 participants, 65% disagree or strongly disagree that intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning grammar. In contrast, only 32% of all the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the given statement. It is worth stating, that although more than half of the participants in each Year group disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement mentioned above, the respondents who had higher disagreement rates about intensive repetitive exercises being effective were in Year 2 (74%) and Year 3 (71%). However, only (68%), of Year 1 and 56% of Year 4 students disagreed or strongly disagreed. While the results show that more than half the respondents in each Year group disagreed with the statement, Year 4 seems to have the least agreement rate compared to the other Year groups.

Table 39: The way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| The way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it | strongly disagree | 7 | 5% | 1 | 1% | 6 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 16 | 3% |
| | disagree | 13 | 8% | 6 | 6% | 9 | 6% | 13 | 6% | 41 | 7% |
| | neutral | 8 | 5% | 2 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 14 | 2% |
| | agree | 62 | 40% | 45 | 42% | 42 | 30% | 94 | 42% | 243 | 39% |
| | strongly agree | 65 | 42% | 53 | 50% | 83 | 58% | 114 | 51% | 315 | 50% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Table 39 clearly shows that out of the 629 participants 89% of them agreed that the way grammar is taught makes them less interested in learning it, whereas only 10% percent disagree. Year 4 had the highest percentage of

agreement rate than the other Year groups, Year 2 92%, Year 3 88% and Year 1 82% which is the lowest among the four levels. The results show that the majority of the students in all the different year groups are not very happy with the way grammar is being taught at the University.

Table 40: Students should be encouraged to participate in different grammar activities during the lesson

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Students should be encouraged to participate in different grammar activities | strongly disagree | 11 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 6 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 19 | 3% |
| | disagree | 11 | 7% | 7 | 7% | 9 | 6% | 13 | 6% | 40 | 6% |
| | neutral | 2 | 1% | 2 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 8 | 1% |
| | agree | 57 | 37% | 43 | 40% | 42 | 30% | 94 | 42% | 236 | 38% |
| | strongly agree | 74 | 48% | 55 | 51% | 83 | 58% | 114 | 51% | 326 | 52% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As demonstrated in the table, almost all the respondents 90% selected agree or strongly agree concerning the statement; *Students should be encouraged to participate in different grammar activities during the lesson*, whereas only 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed and only 1% had a neutral response. It can be noticed from the table that Year 2 91% and Year 4 93% represents higher agreement rates compared to Year 1 85% and Year 3 88%.

Table 41: It is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| It is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar | strongly disagree | 27 | 17% | 19 | 18% | 28 | 20% | 29 | 13% | 103 | 16% |
| | disagree | 42 | 27% | 25 | 23% | 36 | 25% | 66 | 29% | 169 | 27% |
| | neutral | 3 | 2% | 7 | 7% | 6 | 4% | 21 | 9% | 37 | 6% |
| | agree | 58 | 37% | 34 | 32% | 32 | 23% | 60 | 27% | 184 | 29% |
| | strongly agree | 25 | 16% | 22 | 21% | 40 | 28% | 49 | 22% | 136 | 22% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Table 41 reveals that half of the respondents 320 (51%) out of 629 selected agreed or strongly agreed as a response to: *It is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar*. As evident from the responses above, 53% of Year 1, 53% of Year 2, 51% of Year 3 and 49% of Year 4 agreed or strongly agreed. It is clear that barely half of the Year 4 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the given statement, which represents the least agreement among the Year groups, as 42% of Year 4 participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 42 : the grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| the grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar | strongly disagree | 34 | 22% | 26 | 24% | 32 | 23% | 49 | 22% | 141 | 22% |
| | disagree | 55 | 35% | 43 | 40% | 39 | 27% | 69 | 31% | 206 | 33% |
| | neutral | 6 | 4% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 10 | 2% |
| | agree | 31 | 20% | 23 | 21% | 35 | 25% | 59 | 26% | 148 | 24% |
| | strongly agree | 29 | 19% | 14 | 13% | 35 | 25% | 46 | 20% | 124 | 20% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

With regards to the statement: *the grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar, instead he/she should give examples and we try to work out the rules* in Table 45, 55% out of the 629 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The results reveal that Year 1, 57%, Year 2, 64% and Year 3, 50% disagree or strongly disagreed, whereas in contrast, Year 4, 53% agree or strongly agree with item above.

Table 43: the grammar teacher should provide us with the grammatical rules then ask us to apply them to the given exercises

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| the grammar teacher should provide us with the grammatical rules | strongly disagree | 8 | 5% | 3 | 3% | 6 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 19 | 3% |
| | disagree | 14 | 9% | 6 | 6% | 9 | 6% | 13 | 6% | 42 | 7% |
| | neutral | 7 | 5% | 2 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 13 | 2% |
| | agree | 65 | 42% | 45 | 42% | 42 | 30% | 94 | 42% | 246 | 39% |
| | strongly agree | 61 | 39% | 51 | 48% | 83 | 58% | 114 | 51% | 309 | 49% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The number of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *the grammar teacher should provide us with the grammatical rules then ask us to apply them to the given exercises* is 88%. According to the Year groups, 81% of Year 1, 90% of Year 2, 88% of Year 3 and 93% Year 4 agreed or strongly agreed. This leaves only a minority of the respondents 10% who disagree or strongly disagree. The results in table 42 and table 43 seem to be quite controversial. It is evident from the given results in table 42 that a little over half of the respondents agreed that they should be given the chance to extract the rules from the examples provided. However, in table 43 almost all the students agreed or strongly agreed that the lecturer should provide the learners with the rule first.

Table 44: I prefer that the English grammar rules are explained in English, not Arabic

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I prefer that the rules are explained in English, then translated into Arabic | strongly disagree | 13 | 8% | 2 | 2% | 7 | 5% | 11 | 5% | 33 | 5% |
| | disagree | 59 | 38% | 38 | 36% | 52 | 37% | 75 | 33% | 224 | 36% |
| | neutral | 13 | 8% | 8 | 7% | 7 | 5% | 9 | 4% | 37 | 6% |
| | agree | 41 | 26% | 42 | 39% | 46 | 32% | 66 | 29% | 195 | 31% |
| | strongly agree | 29 | 19% | 17 | 16% | 30 | 21% | 64 | 28% | 140 | 22% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

As evident in Table 44 above, in general half of the respondents 53% agreed or strongly agreed on having the rules explained in English, rather than translated into Arabic, while only 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed. With reference to the responses of each Year group separately, 46% of Year 1 chose disagree or strongly disagree with translating the grammar rules into

Arabic after explaining them in English, whereas Year 2 55%, Year 3 53% and Year 4 57% responded agreed or strongly agreed with the item in the table above.

Table 45: I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups during grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups during a grammar lesson | strongly disagree | 5 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 5 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 13 | 2% |
| | disagree | 12 | 8% | 6 | 6% | 9 | 6% | 13 | 6% | 40 | 6% |
| | neutral | 7 | 5% | 1 | 1% | 5 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 15 | 2% |
| | agree | 62 | 40% | 45 | 42% | 40 | 28% | 94 | 42% | 241 | 38% |
| | strongly agree | 69 | 45% | 54 | 50% | 83 | 58% | 114 | 51% | 320 | 51% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The table above shows, 89% of all the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with *preferring to do oral exercises in small groups during a grammar lesson*, while only 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The Year groups who agreed or strongly agreed most are Year 2, 92% and Year 4, 93%. Moreover, Year 1 85% and Year 3 86% also had a high agreement rate. These findings prove that the majority of the learners feel that they would benefit more if they were put in smaller groups.

Table 46: I prefer to learn grammar through reading, listening and speaking activities

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I prefer to learn grammar through reading, listening and speaking activities | strongly disagree | 25 | 16% | 9 | 8% | 21 | 15% | 6 | 3% | 61 | 10% |
| | disagree | 12 | 8% | 22 | 21% | 17 | 12% | 38 | 17% | 89 | 14% |
| | neutral | 2 | 1% | 2 | 2% | 3 | 2% | 4 | 2% | 11 | 2% |
| | agree | 66 | 43% | 62 | 58% | 52 | 37% | 116 | 52% | 296 | 47% |
| | strongly agree | 50 | 32% | 12 | 11% | 49 | 35% | 61 | 27% | 172 | 27% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

According to the results displayed above, 74% of the respondents, according to the statement: *I prefer to learn grammar through reading, listening and speaking activities*, agreed or strongly agreed, while only 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The response rates for the different Year groups were generally the same, with 75% in Year 1, 69% in Year 2, 72% in Year 3 and 79% in Year 4.

Table 47: Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson where the main focus is learning structures

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson where the main focus is learning structures | strongly disagree | 1 | 1% | 6 | 6% | 3 | 2% | 3 | 1% | 13 | 2% |
| | disagree | 15 | 10% | 7 | 7% | 5 | 4% | 5 | 2% | 32 | 5% |
| | neutral | 3 | 2% | 6 | 6% | 4 | 3% | 0 | 0% | 13 | 2% |
| | agree | 64 | 41% | 48 | 45% | 65 | 46% | 116 | 52% | 293 | 47% |
| | strongly agree | 72 | 46% | 40 | 37% | 65 | 46% | 101 | 45% | 278 | 44% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The table above shows that the overall percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed with teaching grammar as a separate lesson is 91%. Out of the 91% of the respondents, 136 87% out of 155 participants are in Year 1, 88 82% out of 107 are in Year 2, 130 92% out of 142 are in Year 3 and 217 97% out of 225 are in Year 4. The overall number of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed is 45 7%.

Table 48: English grammar should be explained in Arabic, while exercises should be done in English

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| English grammar should be explained in Arabic, while exercises should be done in English | strongly disagree | 62 | 40% | 33 | 31% | 62 | 44% | 77 | 34% | 234 | 37% |
| | disagree | 56 | 36% | 47 | 44% | 53 | 37% | 81 | 36% | 237 | 38% |
| | neutral | 2 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 7 | 3% | 11 | 2% |
| | agree | 31 | 20% | 23 | 21% | 22 | 15% | 48 | 21% | 124 | 20% |
| | strongly agree | 4 | 3% | 3 | 3% | 4 | 3% | 12 | 5% | 23 | 4% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The percentage of students, who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement concerning using Arabic language to explain grammar rules, is 75%, whereas only 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Out of the 155 participants in Year 1, 76% disagreed or strongly disagreed, whereas in Year 2, out of the 107 respondents, 75% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 81% of the 142 in Year 3 and 70% of the 225 in Year 4 also disagreed or strongly disagreed. It is noticed from the results that the response rates in each of the Year groups are more or less alike.

Table 49: Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules | strongly disagree | 36 | 23% | 24 | 22% | 51 | 36% | 54 | 24% | 165 | 26% |
| | disagree | 65 | 42% | 47 | 44% | 61 | 43% | 87 | 39% | 260 | 41% |
| | neutral | 5 | 3% | 5 | 5% | 1 | 1% | 10 | 4% | 21 | 3% |
| | agree | 43 | 28% | 21 | 20% | 25 | 18% | 60 | 27% | 149 | 24% |
| | strongly agree | 6 | 4% | 10 | 9% | 4 | 3% | 14 | 6% | 34 | 5% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Table 49 shows that 425 67% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules*, whereas only 183 29% agree or strongly agree with the given statement. It is evident from the table that all the four Year groups; Year 1 65%, Year 2 66%, Year 3 79% and 63% in Year 4, are quite similar in the percentage of students who responded with disagree or strongly disagree.

Table 50: My English will improve more quickly if I study grammar

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language | strongly disagree | 12 | 8% | 4 | 4% | 5 | 4% | 5 | 2% | 26 | 4% |
| | disagree | 10 | 6% | 14 | 13% | 15 | 11% | 29 | 13% | 68 | 11% |
| | neutral | 7 | 5% | 1 | 1% | 8 | 6% | 7 | 3% | 23 | 4% |
| | agree | 92 | 59% | 58 | 54% | 77 | 54% | 131 | 58% | 358 | 57% |
| | strongly agree | 34 | 22% | 30 | 28% | 37 | 26% | 53 | 24% | 154 | 24% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

The results above indicate that 81% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language*, whereas only 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The highest agreement rate was in Years 2 and year 4, where 82% of each year agreed or strongly agreed that their English would improve more quickly if the learned the grammar of the language.

5.8 Construct Four Error Correction

The third construct consists of three items, which measure the students' reactions to the teachers' corrections of their mistakes in class. The majority of students agree with the items in the construct with a mean score of 3.2835. As shown in the table, the statement: *Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (reading, writing or speaking)*, had the highest mean score 3.81 in the construct showing agreement, whereas the respondents disagreed with the statement; *I dislike it when I am corrected in class*, with a mean score of 2.68.

Table 51: Construct D (Error Correction)

| No. | Question | Number of Respondents | Means | Standard Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|---|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | I dislike it when I am corrected in class | 629 | 2.68 | 1.371 | .055 |
| 2 | Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (reading, writing or speaking) | 629 | 3.81 | 1.320 | .053 |
| 3 | When I speak in class I prefer that the teacher always corrects my grammar in all the different English lessons | 629 | 3.36 | 1.365 | .054 |
| Overall means of construct | | 629 | 3.2835 | .75689 | .03018 |
| SCALE: 1:strongly disagree 2:disagree 3:neutral 4:agree 5:strongly agree | | | | | |

The results above indicate that the students expect the teacher to correct their mistakes in all the different lessons. This may be owing to their cultural background because Arab teachers really concentrate on correcting linguistic mistakes and tend to thoroughly correct their students' errors in reading, writing and speaking. Therefore, the students expect the situation to be the same as that in their earlier stages of learning.

Table 52: I dislike it when I am corrected in class

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I dislike it when I am corrected in class | strongly disagree | 26 | 17% | 17 | 16% | 24 | 17% | 59 | 26% | 126 | 20% |
| | disagree | 67 | 43% | 38 | 36% | 62 | 44% | 91 | 40% | 258 | 41% |
| | neutral | 1 | 1% | 10 | 9% | 7 | 5% | 6 | 3% | 24 | 4% |
| | agree | 38 | 25% | 20 | 19% | 28 | 20% | 48 | 21% | 134 | 21% |
| | strongly agree | 23 | 15% | 22 | 21% | 21 | 15% | 21 | 9% | 87 | 14% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

According to Table 52, more than half the respondents 61% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *I dislike it when I am corrected in class*, and only a minority 35% agree or strongly agreed with the item listed in the table. The percentage of students who disliked being corrected in class were higher in Year 1 40% and Year 2 41%, whereas more than half the students in Year 3 61% and Year 4 66% did not mind being corrected in class.

Table 53: Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (writing, reading or speaking)

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes in (writing, reading or speaking) | strongly disagree | 73 | 47% | 32 | 30% | 7 | 5% | 7 | 3% | 119 | 19% |
| | disagree | 55 | 35% | 32 | 30% | 34 | 24% | 55 | 24% | 176 | 28% |
| | neutral | 0 | 0% | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 0% | 2 | 0% |
| | agree | 16 | 10% | 20 | 19% | 29 | 20% | 67 | 30% | 132 | 21% |
| | strongly agree | 11 | 7% | 22 | 21% | 72 | 51% | 95 | 42% | 200 | 32% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Table 53 clearly shows the overall percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement; *Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (writing, reading or speaking)*, is 53%. Many of the respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement were in Year 1 82% and Year 2 60%. In contrast, most of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed were in Year 3 71% and Year 4 72%.

Table 54: When I speak in class I prefer that the teacher always corrects my grammar in all the different English lessons

| | | Academic Level | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|
| | | YEAR 1 | | YEAR 2 | | YEAR 3 | | YEAR 4 | | | |
| | | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| I prefer that the teacher always corrects my grammar in all the different English lessons | strongly disagree | 60 | 39% | 15 | 14% | 10 | 7% | 23 | 10% | 108 | 17% |
| | disagree | 40 | 26% | 38 | 36% | 41 | 29% | 59 | 26% | 178 | 28% |
| | neutral | 2 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 4 | 3% | 5 | 2% | 12 | 2% |
| | agree | 34 | 22% | 32 | 30% | 52 | 37% | 86 | 38% | 204 | 32% |
| | strongly agree | 19 | 12% | 21 | 20% | 35 | 25% | 52 | 23% | 127 | 20% |
| | Total | 155 | 100% | 107 | 100% | 142 | 100% | 225 | 100% | 629 | 100% |

Out of 629 respondents, 52% agreed or strongly agreed and 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: *when I speak in class, I prefer that the teacher always correct my grammar in all the different English lessons.* The highest rate of students who disagreed or strongly disagreed were in Year 1 65% and Year 2 50%.

5.9 Independent T- tests

An Independent sample *t*-test was conducted to identify the difference in means score of students' gender according to each statement in the four constructs. Out of the thirty-one statements, there were only eleven with a statistically significant difference. The last construct displayed no significance between the two groups male and female.

5.9.1 Construct One: The role of grammar

An independent *t*- test was conducted on Construct One in order to compare the differences in mean score between male and female student responses towards the importance of grammar. Out of the seven statements listed in the construct, five showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups (male and female).

Table 55: Grammar is an important part of learning English (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.16 | 1.621 | .105 |
| Female | 391 | 3.77 | 1.575 | .080 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -4.608 | 627 | .000 |

Table 55 shows that the responses of the two groups (male and female) to statement 1 displayed a statistically significant difference ($t = -4.608$, $df = 627$, $p = 0.00$). The mean score of the male respondents was 3.16 and the mean score of the female respondents was 3.77, which shows that although the two groups were in agreement with the statement *Grammar is an important part of learning English*, the females having a higher agreement rate than the males. This is an indication that while both males and females recognise the importance of grammar in learning English the females seem more aware of the role grammar has in learning a foreign language.

Table 56: Learning grammar can help improve my writing (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.05 | 1.668 | .108 |
| Female | 391 | 3.51 | 1.625 | .082 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -3.436 | 627 | .001 |

Table 56 illustrates that there was a significant difference between the results of the two groups, males and females, concerning the statement: *Learning grammar can help improve my writing* ($t = -3.414$, $df = 627$, $p = .001$). Both male students and female students agree with this statement. As for the mean score of female students 3.51, they show a higher agreement rate, than male students 3.05 when it comes to assessing the importance of grammar in writing.

Table 57: Learning grammar can enhance my speaking skills (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.13 | 1.531 | .099 |
| Female | 391 | 3.54 | 1.419 | .072 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -3.349 | 627 | .001 |

The results in Table 57 illustrate that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean score of the responses of the two groups, males and females, ($t = -3.287$, $df = 627$, $p = .001$) towards the statement: *Learning grammar can enhance my speaking skills*. Both male students and female students agree with this statement. However, female students 3.54 gave higher agreement responses than their male 3.13 counterparts. From these results, it can be assumed that more or less both males and females acknowledge the role grammar holds in becoming accurate and fluent speakers.

Table 58: Communicating effectively is possible without having a good command of grammar (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.04 | 1.346 | .087 |
| Female | 391 | 3.25 | 1.292 | .065 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -1.933 | 627 | .054 |

The table above 58 illustrates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the two groups male and female ($t=-1.933$, $df=627$, $p=.054$) concerning their responses to the statement: *Communicating effectively is possible without having a good command of grammar*, illustrating that the female participants agree more with the given statement than the males.

Table 59: Grammar should not be the most important part of learning English (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.51 | 1.507 | .076 |
| Female | 391 | 3.01 | 1.638 | .106 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -3.888 | 627 | .000 |

The results above show that the mean scores of statement *Grammar should not be the most important part of learning English* was statistically significant ($t = -3.888.$, $df = 627$, $P = .000$). The female participants had a slightly neutral response with a mean score of 3.01 whereas the male participants showed agreement to the given statement with a mean score of 3.51.

5.9.2 Construct two

After conducting the t-test on construct two (students' opinions about difficulties with grammar), the results verified that out of the seven statements in the construct concerning students' motivation, only two statements displayed a statistically significant difference in mean score of the responses of both males and females.

Table 60: Learning English grammar is difficult because it is different from Arabic grammar (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.09 | 1.315 | 0.085 |
| Female | 391 | 3.31 | 1.274 | 0.064 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -2.022 | 627 | .044 |

The results in Table 60 above reveal that the mean scores of the two groups; male and female according to the statement *Learning English grammar is difficult because it is different from Arabic grammar* display a statistically significant difference ($t = -4.406$, $df = 627$, $P = .000$). The mean score of the female participants is 3.59, which indicates agreement with the given statement whereas the mean score of the male participants 2.98 indicates that the male participants have a rather neutral response to the statement above.

Table 61: It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.10 | 1.458 | .094 |
| Female | 391 | 3.47 | 1.360 | .069 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -3.240 | 627 | .001 |

Furthermore, the results in the table above show that the mean score of the responses of both males and females, according to the statement, *it is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it*, display a statistically significant difference ($t = -3.240$, $df = 627$, $P = .001$), with a mean of 3.10 for the male students and 3.47 for the females. This goes to show that both males and females agree on the given statement.

5.9.3 Construct three

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there were differences in the scores of the two groups in terms of the students' attitudes towards teaching and learning grammar. From the fifteen statements listed in construct three, only three of the statements were significantly different.

Table 62: it is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.31 | 1.465 | .095 |
| Female | 391 | 3.02 | 1.411 | .071 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|-------|-----|----------------|
| 2.489 | 627 | .013 |

With reference to the first statement: *it is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar* the test illustrated that there is a significant difference between the responses of the male and female students ($t = 2.489$, $df = 627$, $P = .013$) as shown in table 62 above. The male students agreed with a response of 3.31 with a comparatively lower response for females with a mean score of 3.02.

Table 63: in a grammar lesson I prefer that the rules are explained in English, and then translated into Arabic (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.51 | 1.278 | .083 |
| Female | 391 | 3.15 | 1.290 | .065 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|-------|-----|----------------|
| 3.518 | 627 | .000 |

Table 63 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference ($t = 3.518$, $df = 627$, $P = .000$) between the responses of the males 3.51 and females 3.15 towards the statement *in a grammar lesson I prefer that the rules are explained in English, and then translated into Arabic*. The scores show that although both males and females agree to the given statement, males agreed more than females.

Table 64: grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 2.53 | 1.258 | .064 |
| Female | 391 | 2.33 | 1.235 | .080 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|-------|-----|----------------|
| 1.918 | 627 | .056 |

The Table 64 shows that the statement *grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules* yields a significant difference in the responses between the two groups male and females ($t = 1.918$, $df = 627$, $P = .056$) with a mean score for males of 2.33 and for females 2.53 mainly disagreeing to the given statement respectively. The results show both males and females are aware that there is a need for grammar to be taught in lessons.

Table 65: My English will improve more quickly by studying the grammar of the language (t test)

| Gender | NB | Means | Standard deviation | Standard Error |
|--------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 238 | 3.67 | 1.174 | .076 |
| Female | 391 | 3.99 | .920 | .047 |

| T | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|--------|-----|----------------|
| -3.823 | 627 | .000 |

As evident in table 65 the results show that there is a significant difference ($t = -3.823$, $df = 627$, $P = .000$) between the mean score of the two groups according to their response to the statement *My English will improve more quickly by studying the grammar of the language*. Although both male 3.67 and females 3.99 agreed with the given statement, the female respondents agreed more than the males with the fact that studying grammar will improve their English.

5.10 Correlation

Pearson Correlation analysis is used to express the strength and direction of the relationships between two variables (Pallant, 2013). It is conducted here to check the relation among the different variables across different constructs in the questionnaire and as a result, each measure will be discussed separately. The statement: *Grammar is an important part of learning English correlates* with six statements in the questionnaire as shown in Table 69.

Table 66: Pearson correlation - Grammar is important

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|--|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| Grammar is an important part of learning English with Grammar improves my writing | 627 | .744** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English with Grammar can enhance my speaking | 627 | .739** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English with Grammar should be integrated with all other skills | 627 | .230** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English with Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson | 627 | .118** | 0.003 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English With my English will improve more quickly if I study grammar | 627 | .141** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English; with The way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it | 627 | .137** | 0.001 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English With identifying grammar while reading | 627 | .772** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English With teachers should always correct grammar mistakes no matter what the lesson. | 627 | .209** | 0.000 |
| * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 66 displays that there is a strong positive correlation between the statement, *grammar is important* and three statements from the first construct (The role of grammar). This shows that the participants who selected agree or

strongly agreed with the importance of grammar in learning English also agreed or strongly agreed that learning grammar would improve their writing, with $r = .744$. Moreover, *grammar can enhance speaking* also holds a strong positive correlation with *the importance of grammar* with $r = .739$ which also means that those students who agreed on *importance of grammar* also agreed on grammar enhancing speaking.

The table also reveals that the statement *grammar is important in learning English* correlates with 5 statements in the third construct (teaching methods and techniques). *Grammar is important* and *identifying grammar while reading* holds a strong positive correlation with $r = .772$. The second correlation present in the above table is between *the importance of grammar* and *integrating grammar with other skills* $r = .230$. The third correlation is between “*the importance of grammar*” and “*grammar should be taught in a separate lesson*” $r = .118$. The last correlation in the above table is between “*the importance of grammar*” and “*the way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it*” where $r = .137$.

Table 67: Pearson correlation – Learning grammar is learning rules

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| Learning grammar is about learning rules with I enjoy learning grammar | 627 | .657** | 0.000 |
| Learning grammar is about learning rules with Grammar rules should be explained in Arabic and exercises done in English | 627 | .558** | 0.000 |
| * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Out of the thirty statements in the questionnaire, only two displayed a positive correlation with the statement “*Learning grammar is about learning rules*”. Table 67 shows that there is a strong positive correlation between “*Learning grammar is about learning rules*” and “*I enjoy learning grammar*” $r = .657$. This correlation implies that the students who agreed that grammar is about rules also agreed that they enjoyed learning grammar. The statement also has a moderate positive correlation with “*Grammar rules should be explained in Arabic and exercises done in English*” $r = .558$.

Table 68: Pearson correlation I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write with grammar should be integrated. | 627 | .816** | 0.000 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write with the way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it. | 627 | .116** | 0.003 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write with students should be encouraged to participate. | 627 | .131** | 0.001 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write with teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes. | 627 | .186** | 0.000 |
| Grammar is an important part of learning English My English will improve more quickly | 627 | .141** | 0.000 |
| *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 68 reveals there is a correlation between the statements: ‘*I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write* and *grammar should be integrated*. $r = .816$ which is a strong positive correlation. This goes to show that the students are well aware of the effect of teaching grammar and how it is connected to writing. Another positive correlation is between “*I find it hard to*

use my grammar knowledge when I write” and “teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes” with $r=.186$

Table 69: Pearson correlation I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|--|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language with Grammar can enhance my speaking | 627 | .223** | 0.000 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language with It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after learning the grammatical rules. | 627 | .256** | 0.000 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language with Grammar should be integrated | 627 | .984** | 0.000 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language with the way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it | 627 | .201** | 0.000 |
| I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language with I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups during a grammar lesson | 627 | .186** | 0.000 |
| *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

As evident in Table 69, the statement *I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language* correlates with *it is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after learning the grammatical rules* where $r= .256$. Although the correlation is weak, the two statements are quite connected to one another. The statement above, has a strong correlation with *Grammar should be integrated* $r=.984$. This goes to show that students are aware of the fact that learning isolated rules without using them in communication is not beneficial. It is also evident from the table, that the students who agreed on the statement, *I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the*

English language also agreed that rote grammar rules are not useful in learning. Furthermore, that in order for the learners to be able to use their grammar knowledge, grammar should be integrated with the other skills.

Table 70: Pearson correlation it is difficult to understand a text without identifying its grammar

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it with Grammar is an important part of learning English | 627 | .772** | 0.000 |
| It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it with Grammar should be integrated | 627 | .172** | 0.000 |
| It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it with Grammar should be taught gradually | 627 | .127** | 0.001 |
| It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it with Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson | 627 | .175** | 0.000 |
| It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it with My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language | 627 | .162** | 0.000 |
| * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 70 reveals that the statement *“It is difficult to understand a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it”* correlates with *“Grammar is an important part of learning English”* $r = .772$. It also correlates with *“Grammar should be integrated”* $r = .172$, *“Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson”* $r = .175$, *“My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language”* $r = .162$, and finally, with *“Grammar should be taught gradually”* $r = .127$.

Table 71: Pearson correlation it is challenging to become a confident speaker of English

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English with Grammar is important | 627 | .737** | 0.000 |
| It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English with Learning grammar can enhance my speaking | 627 | .856** | 0.000 |
| It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English with Grammar should be integrated | 627 | .255** | 0.000 |
| *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

The statement *It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English* correlates with three statements in the questionnaire as shown in Table 71. The strongest of these correlations is with *grammar can enhance my speaking* $r=.856$. The other correlation is with *Grammar is important* $r=.737$ and the last correlation in the above table is with *Grammar should be integrated* $r=.255$.

Table 72: Pearson correlation the way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it

| Independent variables | Number | Pearson Correlation | Sig (2-tailed) |
|--|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| The way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it with grammar should be integrated | 627 | .195** | 0.000 |
| The way grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it with students should participate in all the different activities | 627 | .962** | 0.000 |
| *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 72 above displays two statements, which correlate with, *the way grammar is taught, makes me less interested in learning it*. The first is *students should participate in all the different activities* which is a strong positive

correlation $r=.962$, whereas the second is a weak positive correlation “*grammar should be integrated*” $r=.195$.

5.11 One-Way Anova

The one-way Anova test was run to investigate the difference in the mean score of the participants’ responses according to each construct as a whole. The one-way Anova was conducted with Duncan’s Post hoc test, which is used to split the groups into homogeneous subsets.

Table 73: Anova

| Construct | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | |
|------------------------|----------------|---------|-------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Importance | Between Groups | 53.138 | 3 | 17.713 | 17.383 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 636.858 | 625 | 1.019 | | |
| | Total | 689.997 | 628 | | | |
| Difficulties | Between Groups | 19.434 | 3 | 6.478 | 7.325 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 552.720 | 625 | 0.884 | | |
| | Total | 572.155 | 628 | | | |
| Methods and Techniques | Between Groups | 3.097 | 3 | 1.032 | 5.222 | 0.001 |
| | Within Groups | 123.586 | 625 | 0.198 | | |
| | Total | 126.684 | 628 | | | |
| Error Correction | Between Groups | 88.156 | 3 | 29.385 | 50.394 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 364.440 | 625 | 0.583 | | |
| | Total | 452.596 | 628 | | | |

Table 73 illustrates the results of the Anova test on the four constructs (*Importance, Difficulties, Methods and techniques, Error correction*). The One

- Way Anova Table shows that there were significant differences amongst the four, year groups.

Table 74: Importance of Grammar

| Duncan ^{a,b} | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|
| level of study | N | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | |
| | | 1 | 2 |
| third year | 142 | 2.9456 | |
| second year | 107 | 2.8198 | |
| first year | 155 | 2.7304 | |
| fourth year | 225 | | 3.4229 |
| Sig. | | 0.085 | 1.000 |

Table 74 shows that there is a significant difference between the responses among the year groups regarding the importance of grammar. Year One=2.7304, Year Two=2.8198 and Year Three=2.9456, tend to show more of a neutral response to the items in the construct, whereas Year Four= 3.4229 generally agreed. The results reveal that fourth year students, seem to demonstrate their support for grammar and the role it occupies in order to enhance their productive skills efficiently. While first, second, and third year students did not seem to think that grammar had an effect on improving their skills. This could be because they have been learning grammar for so many years but it has not helped them improve their productive skills.

Table 75: Difficulties with Grammar

| Duncan ^{a,b} | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|
| level of study | N | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | |
| | | 1 | 2 |
| Second Year | 107 | 3.4097 | |
| Third Year | 142 | 3.4601 | |
| First Year | 155 | 3.6226 | |
| Fourth Year | 225 | | 3.8422 |
| Sig. | | 0.067 | 1.000 |

The findings in Table 75 indicate that although all the year groups agree with having difficulty with grammar, Year Four students, strongly agreed with the items in the construct. First Year = 3.6226, Second Year = 3.4097, and Third year =3.4601 also agreed and had more or less the same response rate.

Table 76: Methods and Techniques

| Duncan ^{a,b} | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|
| level of study | N | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | |
| | | 1 | 2 |
| First Year | 155 | 3.4470 | |
| Second Year | 107 | 3.4907 | |
| Third Year | 142 | 3.5181 | |
| Fourth Year | 225 | | 3.6206 |
| Sig. | | 0.199 | 1.000 |

As evident from the Table above, regarding the construct concerned with *“method and techniques of teaching grammar”*, there is a significant difference between the responses of; First=3.4470, Second=3.4907 and Third=3.5181

Year students and the responses of Fourth = 3.6206 year students. The results yield that although all the year groups are in agreement with the construct, fourth year students display a higher agreement rate. From the outcome, it is clear that Year Four students are more aware of the methods and techniques, which enhance their learning and their accuracy and fluency.

Table 77: Error Correction

| Duncan ^{a,b} | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| level of study | N | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| First Year | 155 | 2.3849 | | |
| Second Year | 107 | | 2.8941 | |
| Third Year | 255 | | | 3.2281 |
| Fourth Year | 142 | | 3.6206 | 3.3427 |
| Sig. | | 1.000 | 1.000 | 0.199 |

Table 77 shows that there is a significant difference between the year groups in their responses towards error correction. While Year One and Year Two students disagree with the items concerning error correction with Year One=2.3849 more in disagreement than second year =2.8941, whereas third year=3.2281 have a more of a neutral response and fourth year=3.6206 participants agree with the items dealing with error correction. The results hold that year three and year four students have developed confidence through their years of learning and are not intimidated by having their errors corrected in class.

5.12 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a technique, which is based on correlations. Two types of factor analysis exist: exploratory and confirmatory. The first type is used to explore possible relationships between variables, whereas the second is used to confirm or reject hypothesised relationships between variables. The main aim of factor analysis is the reduction of data into smaller components. Therefore it is usually used to validate questionnaires (Woodrow 2014). According to Woodrow (2014), factor analysis can be used to reduce data from a large set of variables or items to a smaller group, to establish a link between observed and unobserved variables or to validate questionnaires. For the purpose of this study, it is used to validate the questionnaire.

Table 78: Exploratory Factor Analysis

| F1 | | F2 | F3 | F4 | F5 |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Grammar and communicative skills | | Explicit grammar instruction | Implicit Grammar Instruction | Difficulties with Grammar | Error Correction |
| B2 | | C13 | C4 | B1 | D1 |
| A2 | | C15 | C10 | B4 | D2 |
| B6 | | C12 | C5 | B3 | |
| A4 | | C8 | C7 | B5 | |
| A3 | | A6 | C1 | | |
| A5 | | A7 | | | |
| C14 | | C3 | | | |
| Cronbach's Alpha | .949 | .900 | .926 | .913 | .867 |
| Cumulative % | 21.006 | 37.703 | 53.381 | 66.488 | 73.403 |

The interpretation of the items in the table above are found in (appendix 4)

The exploratory factor analysis of the data from 31 Likert-scale items resulted in a clear five-factor solution. The five factors explain 73% of the variances found in the analysis. Factor loadings of .56 or greater on the obliquely rotated factor matrix were considered significant. The assumptions of factor analysis were investigated and met. In addition, the Cronbach alpha for the rotated items in all was .86. The extraction method used was Principle Component and the rotation method used was Varimax. Table 8.1 below, displays the factor loadings for the five factors. The first factor, labelled "*Grammar and communicative skills*," contains items that address the role of grammar in enhancing the communicative skills. The second factor is labelled "*Explicit grammar instruction*" because it contains items addressing teaching grammar in a deductive way. The third factor is characterised as "*Implicit Grammar Instruction*" which contains items concerned with teaching grammar inductively without giving the rules. The items of the fourth factor, which is labelled "*Difficulties with Grammar*", are concerned with the learners' difficulties with grammar. The fifth and last factor labelled "*Error correction*" contains only two items, which address the learners' perceptions towards error correction. From the 31 components, six were extracted from which two had double loadings and four were excluded during the rotation. Table 81 illustrates the five factors and the Cronbach's Alpha of each factor. It also illustrates the total variances explained, for each factor.

5.13 Qualitative Data

In addition to the surveys for the quantitative data, semi structured interviews were also conducted and analysed using content analysis, in order to support and compare some of the findings of the quantitative study. This section examines the results of the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews to examine the teaching and learning of English grammar. Moreover, it aims to investigate the issue of teaching grammar in depth and to discover how the lecturers feel and think about the teaching of grammar. The sample involved thirteen lecturers from Tripoli University Faculty of Languages Department of English. All the lecturers included in the interviews have taught grammar for more than two years.

Table 79: Demographic data for the lecturers

| Lecturer | Gender | Age | Nationality | Qualification | Teaching experience |
|-------------|--------|-----|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Lecturer 1 | Female | 38 | Libyan | MA | 12 Years |
| Lecturer 2 | Female | 29 | Libyan | MA | 3 Years |
| Lecturer 3 | Female | 40 | Libyan | MA | 17 years |
| Lecturer 4 | Female | 34 | Libyan | MA | 5 years |
| Lecturer 5 | Female | 25 | Libyan | MA | 3 years |
| Lecturer 6 | Female | 38 | Libyan | PhD | 10 Years |
| Lecturer 7 | male | 39 | Libyan | MA | 11 Years |
| Lecturer 8 | male | 45 | Libyan | PhD | 17 Years |
| Lecturer 9 | Female | 39 | Libyan | MA | 15 Years |
| Lecturer 10 | Female | 40 | Libyan | PhD | 15 Years |
| Lecturer 11 | Female | 43 | Libyan | MA | 10 Years |
| Lecturer 12 | Female | 48 | Libyan | MA | 20 Years |
| Lecturer 13 | Female | 30 | Libyan | MA | 7 Years |

As evident in the table above, the participants who took part in the interviews were eleven females and only two males of which only three had a PhD and the other ten had a Master's degree. The lecturers' years of teaching English in general ranged between 3-20 years. All the lecturers were of Libyan nationality.

The key themes of the interviews were not very different from that of the questionnaire. The interviews were divided into four main themes, which are illustrated in the table below. The findings of the qualitative data were presented according to the themes as shown in the following table.

Table 80: Themes of the interview

| Themes of the interview | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Theme one | The role of grammar in foreign language teaching |
| Theme Two | Methods of teaching English grammar |
| Theme three | Students' outcome of grammar teaching |
| Theme four | The grammar teaching syllabus |

5.14 Perceptions on the role of grammar in Foreign Language teaching

In response to the question “*do you enjoy teaching grammar?*” out of the thirteen lecturers, eight answered “yes” whereas only one Lecturers answered “no” straight away, and four of them said, “It *depends*”. One of the lecturers who enjoyed teaching grammar elaborated further:

“I enjoy teaching grammar. Actually, I love teaching grammar. This may be because I used to love learning English grammar since I was a secondary school student. I used to look for grammar tests in course books and enjoyed doing all the exercises. This seems to influence my interest in teaching grammar. I feel that the teaching of grammar makes me learn more and more about English language usage.”

(Lecturer, 6)

Another lecturer who also enjoyed teaching grammar commented:

“Yes, I enjoy it very much. I enjoy explaining the rules to students in different ways. My passion for grammar teaching is influenced by my infatuation with Arabic grammar.”

(Lecturer 3)

On the other hand, the lecturer who did not enjoy teaching grammar stated:

“No, not really, the teacher does not enjoy teaching grammar especially if the students’ level is low or the lesson does not have grammar that has an equivalent in the first language grammar, it will be difficult to convey the information to the students and the lesson will be boring.”

(Lecturer 2)

The lecturers who responded with *“it depends”* or *“sometimes”*, considered that the motivation of the students and the curriculum both have an effect on their enjoyment of grammar teaching. One lecturer clarified:

“It depends on the students’ motivation and the syllabus. According to my experience, I enjoyed teaching grammar to medical students in an EAP course since they were very active and motivated in class. They participated and asked many questions. However, I was bored and frustrated with my English language students, because they were very quiet in class and I felt the class was mainly teacher centred despite my trying to encourage them to create examples and participate.”

(Lecturer 4)

It can be noticed from the above statements that more than half the lecturers who teach grammar at the English Department, Tripoli University consider grammar a rather pleasant subject for them to teach.

When discussing the question “*do you believe that grammar helps improve the students’ communicative competence?*” Eleven out of the thirteen interview participants stated that grammar does assist in improving the students’ communicative competence but grammar instruction should precede the development of communicative skills in order that the students could apply the grammar they learned to communicative activities, if the rules were taught successfully. One lecturer stated:

“Yes, to some extent ...although I still believe that the learners need to practice using accurate grammar in class and using it in communicative settings to enhance what they have learned. Learning grammar strengthens their spoken and written language ...and directs them to use the language correctly.”

(Lecturer 1)

Other lecturers explain:

“I believe that knowing the correct grammar of a language facilitates the process of communication and provides clear understanding and knowledge between speakers. It also adds more confidence to the speaker so that he/she could focused on meaning and pronunciation, rather than concentrating on the correct production of grammatical structures.”

(Lecturer 13)

“Yes, we as teachers and students have different levels of competence. Understanding different areas of grammar is the basis that helps acquire and build the language.”

(Lecturer 2)

The lecturers' statements indicate that they feel that grammar does have an impact on the students' communicative competence, which could be due to the lecturers' own learning and teaching experiences.

The data also indicate that the lecturers in this study show a strong collective agreement that grammar acts as the cornerstone for communicative competence in foreign language learning. They believe that the learning of separate grammar items enables learners to build a mental framework for further learning and give them the confidence to use the language in communication. It seems that they were more encouraging about explicit teaching than communication because for them self-confidence and the ability to communicate in English accurately were conditioned by a good knowledge of grammar. They believe that explicit grammar knowledge is useful to their students in that it influences the development of the implicit knowledge that supports their ability to communicate confidently and accurately.

When asked *“Do you believe that teaching grammar is necessary in learning a foreign language?”* the majority of the lecturers said yes, with only one who specified that

“It depends on the way it is taught. When grammar is taught in a practical way, it can help learners to improve their language. It might be better if teachers try to teach grammar implicitly.”

(Lecturer 3)

The lecturers who considered grammar necessary confirmed that

“I believe that teaching of grammar is necessary in that it serves as a cornerstone on which the teacher can make an outline for the teaching of language skills. Here again I need to allude to the issue of integration. That is, the teaching of grammar can be considered both as a basic for the teaching of language skills and an important contributing factor. Such integration may help develop students’ communicative competence and performance.

(Lecturer 6)

Similarly, other lecturers commented:

“In the setting where English is taught as a second or foreign language it is considered a must because for example there are different tenses. Each expresses a particular time place and manner of an event taking place.”

(Lecturer 7)

“Teaching grammar is a necessary part of foreign language teaching, it helps learners to communicate more effectively and share accurate ideas and opinions either orally or written. Using poor grammatical structure usually results in

misunderstanding and imprisonment to the learners when they use the language.”

(Lecturer 13)

The views above elaborated that lecturers believe teaching grammar is a necessary part of learning a foreign language especially if it is integrated and taught in a way, which allows the oral and written practice of the grammatical structures taught. Lecturer 13 elaborated that knowing words only, without being able to structure these words into meaningful sentences is not enough. Without being able to use grammar accurately, learners will feel imprisoned and restrained. Not being able to convey what they mean.

Concerning the question *“Do you consider grammar, in general, to be an important part of learning English?”* the responses showed that all but one of the lecturers considered grammar important. The lecturer who believed that grammar is not important stated:

I do not think that grammar is important for comprehensible speaking and writing. There is no connection between the development of these skills and grammar. In my opinion practice can improve these skills not grammar. However, helping learners apply grammatical rules into communicative tasks (for example, writing and speaking) is very challenging.

(Lecturer 2)

However, the lecturers who considered grammar important all agree that without grammar, the learners would not be able to express precise meanings. Lecturer 5 indicated, *“In my opinion, grammar is the pillar of English language. Without it, people who share English as a communicative language will have problems understanding each other.”*

In addition, the lack of grammatical accuracy produces insecure learners who are afraid to speak out in the foreign language for fear of not expressing the correct meaning. Other lecturers' comments were as follows:

“Yes, grammar is important, especially in second/foreign language teaching and learning environments because students are learning a new different language from their mother tongue, it is the basis of language. Therefore, presenting the rules of the new language broadens their knowledge and awareness of using the new language correctly and it reduces mother tongue interference.”

(Lecturer 1)

“Yes it is, grammar is the building blocks of a language it is the cement which keep the bricks of a wall together. It allows you to play with words and make many different structures, which convey various meanings. This helps students become creative and fluent “

(Lecturer 12)

“Yes grammar is important, for me, I consider grammar as the backbone or skeleton of the language. Students with mistakes in grammar will never be able to produce correct sentence. In fact, it is important because it makes the student feel confident in terms of communicating ideas.”

(Lecturer 7)

Data from the interviews show that twelve out of thirteen lecturers placed great importance on grammar in language teaching. They believe that grammar is the basis for communicative competence to be built on, and they do not believe that students could communicate effectively and accurately in English without a good knowledge of grammar. They view grammar as the *“basis of language”* *“one of the main pillars of language”* or the *“grammar is the building blocks of a language it is the cement which keep the bricks of a wall together”* The lecturers also observed grammar as; *“the backbone or skeleton of language”*. These descriptions show how much the lecturers at Tripoli University consider the important role grammar holds in learning a foreign language.

5.15 Methods and techniques of teaching grammar in class

When the lecturers were asked the question, *“How do you teach grammar in your class? Do you teach grammar inductively or deductively, implicitly or explicitly?”* The responses varied. Eight out of the thirteen interviews claimed that they used the traditional method of teaching grammar, by first presenting the rules, followed by examples then giving the students many different exercises. One lecturer stated that:

“I teach grammar by using the traditional method: explaining the rules to the students and then give them exercises to check their understanding. Sometimes if there is an equivalent to the rule in Arabic, I use it, as the existence of this rule in their minds and it will help them present it in English.

(Lecturer 2)

The lecturers elaborated that from their own experience when they knew the differences or similarities between a certain rule in English and its equivalent in Arabic, it helped them in understanding the rule more.

Similarly, another lecturer commented:

“To be honest, I follow the traditional way. I give them the rule and some examples and then I ask them to do some drills to practice using it correctly.”

(Lecturer 3)

The lecturer explained that they have never really tried to use any other way in teaching grammar and they find it quite effective for some students in answering exam questions. One lecturer said that the students were very capable of applying the rules to sentences and had good exam marks.

Three out of the thirteen lecturers stated that they did not follow a certain method in teaching grammar. Lecturer 12 claimed, *“In fact the way I teach grammar is not fixed. I follow different procedures depending on the situation”*.

The lecturer further elaborated that teaching grammar usually depends on the students' levels and learning styles. Sometimes giving the rules first then

answering questions is necessary with certain rules whereas in other cases using the language orally and using pictures and texts help the students in understanding the grammar rule and using it. Similarly, another lecturer indicated:

“The way of teaching grammar for me always depends on students’ levels and the class size, but I often present the grammar rules, and then provide some examples. Finally, I ask students to create their own. If the class size were small, I would put students into groups to work out the rules from the given exercises. I also think that the teacher’s knowledge of grammar rules should be strong so that s/he can be creative in explaining the rule to the learners”

(Lecturer 4)

Lecturer 4, explained that class size is the main factor which controls the use of a certain method because if the class size is large, the lecturer would not be able to give all the students the same opportunity to practice a certain structure. In addition, the lecturer also mentioned grammar knowledge as an important factor in becoming a competent lecturer of grammar.

A third lecturer stated:

“I follow the instructions that are presented in the teacher book or course book. When I explain the lesson I give the students some exercises to practice and I try to make students participate with me in providing the correct answer on the board.”

(Lecturer 1)

Only one of the lecturers indicated that they used the communicative approach in teaching grammar by focusing on grammar usage not rules. One lecturer stated that they presented the class with examples and tried comparing the rule with their L1 in order for them to be more aware of how the rules work differently. This would help in mastering the rule and not forgetting it. The lecturer commented that:

“By giving examples, by choosing interesting events, I make my sentences very clear for the learner to notice the structure and after that I start the lesson. For the passive voice, for example, I try to make the students compare between English and their L1”.

(Lecturer 10)

It is noticed from all the different comments given by the lecturers that the traditional method is still popular at Tripoli University and only a few of the lecturers use different methods in teaching grammar. It is also noticeable that some of the lecturers are not happy with the use of the traditional methods although other lecturers find it rather successful.

According to the lecturers' responses to the question *“What influences your grammar teaching? The responses varied between either previous teaching experience or the way they were taught in the past, and for some both. Out of the thirteen lecturers, six said that the way they teach was influenced by their own teaching experiences. One of the lecturers specified:*

“My personal experience in learning grammar influences my teaching...as I try to convey the grammar rules in a simple manner that every student is able to understand ...and I try to clarify and simplify what students didn't like or understand from my previous classes.”

(Lecturer 1)

One lecturer stated that they have been teaching grammar for seven years and from their experience, they are quite aware of how best to teach grammar. The lecturer also stated that being successful in conveying the grammatical rule or structure to the students does not just rely on the lecturers' knowledge of the various methods of teaching grammar. It also depends on the lecturers' confidence of their knowledge of grammatical rules, which will help in creating different materials for the lesson. One lecturer indicated:

“I believe that my knowledge of grammar is influenced by the language teaching theories and concepts I have learned, along with my teaching experience which is over 7 years, in addition to my previous learning experiences also influences my teaching “

(Lecturer 13)

Only two of the lecturers declared that their teaching was influenced by the way they were taught before. One of the lecturers highlighted:

“I use my teacher's way to teach grammar. Sometimes I check the Internet, to find if there are any new techniques for teaching grammar which I can add to the lesson in order to

make it more interesting, because it is generally boring to the students”

(Lecturer 2)

Five of the lecturers claimed that both their previous teaching and their learning experiences influenced their grammar instruction. One lecturer stated:

“At the beginning of my teaching career, I was influenced by the way I was taught .I explained to the students the structure of a given grammatical rule and then tried to give them a list of questions to answer. Years later, I started to lean towards the communicative approach and that influenced my way of teaching grammar, although it was quite difficult to really apply in class with the large number of students and their ultimate dependency on what the teacher dictates to them.”

(Lecturer 5)

The lecturers believed that the way they were taught in the past using the traditional method, and for some, the direct method was quite effective in of their own competency in grammar. Moreover, they claimed that their past experience with teaching grammar to undergraduates made them aware of what best suits the learner. It also prompted the lecturers to look for interesting and creative ways to enhance the students’ understanding of the rules. Although the lecturers were very convinced of the effectiveness of the traditional method in learning the rules, they claimed that the large number of students and the limited time allocated for the lesson was a barrier for encouraging the use of the rules, which are taught in class. Furthermore, one lecturer stated that teaching in general was teacher centred rather than student

centred which made it quite difficult for the students to interact with any other learner centred method.

“The methods I use in teaching grammar and any other module are largely influenced by the way I was taught, but from my experience I feel that it is not the best way to make students benefit from grammar. Therefore, I am open to any professional suggestions that may help me improve my way of teaching.”

(Lecturer 3)

The lecturers' responses to the question *“Do you explain the grammar rules in English only or do you also use Arabic?”,* were quite similar. While they all said that they do use the L1 at some point in the grammar lesson, the lecturers had split views as to whether the use of the L1 was beneficial or not. From the thirteen lecturers, only three said that they found using the L1 to explain certain rules necessary and helpful. Lecturer 8 stated, *“Yes I often do use L1 in teaching English in general. The first language is maintained as the reference system in the learning of the second language.”* In addition, another lecturer who considered the use of L1 useful asserted:

“Because of the low levels of many students, I use both languages. I explain the rules in English, then I always find myself obliged to explain them again in Arabic too. I also feel that when I use the L1 to explain a structure, I can sense that

my students are more engaged in the lesson and interact more when we do the exercises”

(Lecturer 3)

Ten of the lecturers did use the L1 at some point in the lesson but did not approve of its use because they commented that it hinders their students' goal of learning English. One lecturer stated that:

“I prefer to use only English and just provide examples to contrast and compare between both languages. However, due to students distressing that they need translation, I translate. Therefore, I think it is not beneficial to use the Arabic language because Arabic may hinder their understanding and memorization of new English vocabulary.”

(Lecturer 4)

With regards to the lecturers' responses to the question *“have you ever tried to teach grammar (unconsciously) by providing your students with many different examples (such as sentences, extracts and passages) and having them work out the rules for themselves?”* not all the lecturers could really differentiate between implicit and explicit grammar teaching. Therefore the question needed to be altered in order for them to respond. Almost all the lecturers said; although they have tried giving many examples about a certain structure, they needed to provide the rule at a certain point, because only the students who were at advanced levels were able to pick up the structure and

work with it. While the other students struggle with the examples, which compels the lecturer to give the rule first. One lecturer commented:

“Yes, I have tried giving many examples and extracts but not all the students respond and co-operate. I find this way especially effective for more advanced levels.”

(Lecturer 6)

Only one lecturer said that they had never tried this approach before. They stated that this approach is time consuming and the number of students in the class makes it difficult to try any other approach. The lecturer also indicated that the lack of training and workshops for lecturers also makes it quite difficult to have a grip of any other method rather than the traditional method. The lecturers all agreed that using the traditional method was quite useful if it was accompanied by practicing communicative skills

When asked, *“Do you think grammar should be taught in all the different modules such as listening, speaking writing and reading comprehension?”* nine of the lecturers agreed that grammar should be integrated, with different modules but at the same time, grammar should still be taught as a separate lesson with the use of communicative activities during the lesson. However, four lecturers did not think highly of including grammar with all the different skills. Out of the four lecturers who did not think highly of integration, four refused any kind of integration of grammar in any lesson considering isolated grammar instruction more beneficial with some alteration in the methods used,

while another of the four lecturers considered integrating grammar with speaking and writing but not reading. One stated:

“For writing and speaking, yes, but for reading, too much focus on grammar can confuse the reading process, since the learner may face different contexts of various types of language for example; advertisements and press headlines which don’t usually take into account the use of accurately grammatical sentences.”

(Lecturer 10)

The fourth lecturer indicated that integrating grammar would be more important with teaching writing than with any other skill, stated that:

“I suppose that it is always important to teach grammar in all of the above mentioned modules, concentrating basically on writing. It is necessary to keep reminding students of the correct grammar rules which they are supposed to use and to correct their grammatical mistakes in all the language components.”

(Lecturer 13)

Lecturer 13 elaborated that although grammar is important to the other skills it should be integrated into teaching writing skills in particular. One lecturer claimed that grammar should not be taught in a manner where for example a reading lesson would turn into a grammar lesson. However, certain exercises should be completed with the focus on a certain grammatical structure which students could identify from the passage or text.

As for the lecturers who considered the integration of grammar important, they believed that including some grammar instruction when needed in any of the

taught modules could be beneficial because it will guide students into improving their productive and receptive skills. Lecturer 6 also stated that there should be collaboration among all the different module tutors regarding the teaching of grammar. The lecturer indicated, since one of the essential criteria for the assessment of writing and speaking is the students' ability to construct correct grammatical sentences and perform meaningful utterances, grammar needs to be introduced into these modules.

Regarding the response to *"How were you taught grammar when you were a student and do you think the way you were taught was effective?"*, all the lecturers stated that they were always taught by the traditional methods whether it was in Arabic or English. For them, it was the only way they had experienced in all their years of learning. Out of the thirteen lecturers, only two claimed that the traditional method was ineffective for them. Lecturer 7 stated, *"I was taught grammar in a simple traditional way which I think was not very effective"*. However, all the other lecturers stated that they found the traditional method somewhat effective. One lecturer stated:

"Because I enjoyed learning grammatical rules, the way in which I was taught was effective for me but it was not the case with some of the students in my class who did not enjoy grammar. Many of my classmates hated grammar and considered it to be very boring and complicated."

(Lecturer 3)

Similarly, Lecturer 5 stated, *“I recall that grammar-translation method was the only way of teaching grammar and surprisingly, it was effective.”* Likewise, another lecturer indicated:

“In the traditional methods, the teacher stands in front of us, using the blackboard and chalk to explain the grammar rules. Generally, yes it was effective at that time and I think it is still effective”

(Lecturer 2)

Regarding the question *“Do you think that the way you were taught grammar has an influence on how you teach it today?”* all of the lecturers agreed that their methods of teaching were strongly influenced by their learning experience. The lecturers indicated that even though a small number of lecturers were not that keen on using the traditional method, the crowded classes and the lack of teaching facilities played an important role in the methods they used in teaching grammar. One lecturer clarified:

I try to avoid the traditional ways that I thought weren't useful, such as writing the whole lesson out on the blackboard with little effort from teachers to help and explain the use of that rule. But because of the students' expectations from the lecturer in class, I find myself obligated to use the traditional method.”

(Lecturer 1)

Another lecturer indicated:

“Yes, I still use the same way of teaching because the same educational environment still exists. There is no development in the facilities or the circumstances to encourage the use of new methods of teaching.”

(Lecturer 2)

When the lecturers were asked, *“Are you aware of the different methods and approaches of teaching English?”* the responses varied. It seemed that the lecturers did not really have much knowledge of the various methods and approaches used in teaching the English language. Some lecturers recalled the grammar translation method, the direct method and the eclectic approach.

Others stated that they had an idea of how the communicative and functional approaches work but felt a lack of confidence in applying them in class. One lecturer stated:

“I know the functional and communicative approaches. However, traditional methods of teaching English still carry some advantages. There is nothing which is called the best approach or method; each type has advantages and disadvantages.”

(Lecturer 6)

Some lecturers showed confusion with the question and one answered:

“I have heard about deductive and inductive approaches, but I do not use them. I prefer the traditional way, because using new approaches needs sources, well-equipped classrooms and labs not blackboard and markers.”

(Lecturer 2)

Lecturer 13 showed confusion between teaching and learning theories and stated:

“Yes to some extent. I can name the Sociocultural and Constructivist Learning Theories, the Constructivism Theory, and the Metacognitive Theory.”

When the difference between them was brought to the lecturer’s attention the lecturer said it had been a long time since they studied teaching methods and that they seemed to have forgotten. They then recalled the grammar translation method, the direct method, and the communicative approach.

Concerning the question, *“Do you correct students’ grammatical errors when they speak?”*, four out of the thirteen lecturers said that they did correct their students’ errors in class when they speak. Although they all had different strategies, in the way they corrected the errors, they all agreed that it was very important to correct errors immediately after they occur so that they do not go unnoticed and occur again. Lecturer 3 indicated:

“Although I feel that the students are sometimes uncomfortable with being corrected in front of their classmates, but yes, I usually do, but in a polite way; that is, I repeat what a student says but I correct the grammatical mistakes and write them on the blackboard after the mistake is committed.”

Whereas another stated:

“Yes I do, but correcting students’ errors is effective if the manner of correction is not direct since direct correction and interruption may hurt students’ feelings and shake their confidence. The teacher has to know how better to instruct, correct, and give effective feedback to his/her learners. I usually, collect the mistakes and correct them by writing and discussing them on the board without implying who made the mistake.”

(Lecturer 4)

However, nine of the lecturers stated that they preferred not to correct their students’ mistakes considering the emotional effect it will have on their self-esteem. One lecturer stated that they were satisfied with their students just to stand in class and try, even though mistakes are made.

“No, I do not correct their mistakes when they are speaking, because it is not encouraging and embarrassing for them at the same time. I speak to the student at the end of the class alone and I try to find time the next day and explain the rule for everyone’s benefit.”

(Lecturer 13)

When the lecturers were asked, “*Do you correct your students’ errors in their written work?*”, they all agreed and said that they found it very important and useful to correct their students’ written work. One lecturer pointed out that they found it more useful to underline the mistakes and have the students correct them then hand their corrected work in again. The Lecturer explained:

“I underline the mistakes and write symbols to categorise the types of mistakes (word order, tense, spelling, etc.). which makes it simple for the students to notice their mistakes and try to correct them by themselves so that they can learn from them”.

All the lecturers felt that their students did not feel intimidated to find corrections in their written work and responded positively to amending these corrections. However, this was not the case when the students’ errors were corrected when they spoke. The lecturers felt that it may cause some discomfort to some of the students but it was important for the learners to recognise their mistakes and address them immediately so they do not occur again.

For the responses to the question “*Do you think that correcting your students’ errors is effective or not?*” almost all the lecturers agreed that they found error correction to be quite beneficial at times. Only three of the lecturers stated that the effectiveness of error correction depends on certain circumstances such as the way errors are corrected by the lecturer and how the students react.

“It depends on both teachers and students; i.e. teachers’ way of error correction and students’ attitudes and reactions towards error correction. Sometimes students feel embarrassed to be corrected in front of their classmates or worse this might alienate them from learning.”

(Lecturer 8)

Although the three lecturers claimed that it depended on the lecturer and student, they still agreed that it is effective to some extent if it is done the right way bearing in mind the students’ motivation and sensitivity.

5.16 Perceptions on the students’ outcome of grammar teaching

When discussing the question concerning the role of grammar, in improving the productive and receptive skills, most of the lecturers said that it does improve speaking and writing skills and it help in comprehension when reading and listening, if it is taught in the right way. Lecturer 6 argued:

“Yes, I do believe that grammar plays an important role in the development of speaking and writing skills. Actually, I do not quite agree with the notion that considers grammar as a separate entity from these productive skills. As I already said, I think grammar is the “cornerstone” of language learning if it is presented in the right way, which is learning to use grammar, not learning about grammar.

Another lecturer emphasised the role of feedback in improving grammar in speaking and writing. The lecturer claimed that:

“It depends on the learner’s competence and the way grammar is taught. For example, feedback is important regarding teaching/learning a second/foreign language. Thus, if a teacher draws the learners’ attention to grammar while giving feedback, then the learner will improve his/her speaking and writing skills.”

(Lecturer 5)

Only two of the lecturers said that learning grammar has no effect on improving speaking and writing. The lecturer commented that learning grammar could slightly enhance comprehension. The lecturer stated:

“I do not think that it does, but grammar is still important for comprehensible speaking and writing. There is no connection between the development of these skills and grammar. In my opinion, practice can improve these skills not grammar. However, helping learners apply grammatical rules into communicative tasks (for example, writing and speaking) is very challenging.”

(Lecturer 2)

Lecturer 13, who disagreed that grammar alone, is likely to improve speaking and writing skills stated:

“I do not think that teaching grammar rules only is enough to improve students’ speaking and writing skills, it is always important to involve students into real language practices and communication situations so that they could probably feel the language and understand how it is used.”

The lecturers' responses reveal that most of the lecturers really believe that grammar has a strong role in improving the ability of the learners to write and speak in the L2.

When the lecturers were asked if they noticed whether their students were able to use the grammar rules they learnt when they speak, almost all the lecturers confirmed that only a few students were able to speak accurately using correct grammar. Just one lecturer said that most of the students the lecturer taught could use accurate grammar when they spoke.

Concerning the question about the learners' ability to use their grammar knowledge in writing, seven of the lecturers stated that unfortunately only some of the students were able to. They also mentioned that the students' ability to produce accurate grammatical structures was more evident in writing than in speaking, whereas the other six claimed that most of their students were quite capable, to a certain extent, of using their grammar knowledge in writing. One of the lecturers highlighted:

“Yes, many of them can. Once the students have a good understanding about the grammatical rules and their functions, they are able to use their grammar knowledge appropriately in writing.”

(Lecturer 6)

Similarly, another lecturer claimed

“Many of the learners are able to use their grammar knowledge in writing because they have enough time to think and write, unlike in speaking.”

(Lecturer 3)

Although the lecturers had two varying responses they all agreed with the fact that the students were to some extent, able to use their grammar knowledge in writing more than in speaking.

Concerning the question relating to the difficulty of teaching grammar, all the participants considered that grammar was not difficult to teach. Lecturer 9 stated, *“Grammar is not difficult to teach at all as long as the lecturer has a very good understanding of the grammar rule and structures.”* Lecturer 9 also indicated the importance of having a good grammatical background in the grammatical rules and structures. Another point, which emerged from the interviews, and is quite important, is that the lecturers had no idea what the outcome of the grammar module was. Their only evidence was the marks on the learners’ exams. Although only two lecturers mentioned this comment, it is very important in the sense that the lecturer does not know what the intended outcome of the lectures is and whether it has been fulfilled or not.

5.17 The grammar-teaching syllabus

When asked, *“Do you have a clear grammar teaching programme with learning objectives and expected outcomes?”* all the participants said that they did not have any clear programme, which contained learning objectives or expected outcomes. Some of the participants claimed that they were given a list of the items which were to be included in the curriculum but it did not state what was to be achieved by teaching these items. Four lecturers said that a book was appointed for them to teach certain structures and the lecturers would know if the learner learned these structures through their marks on the exam papers. One of the four lecturers stated,

“Having any oral practice in class to see if the students have accurate grammar or to practise the given rules is out of the question because the class is very crowded and doing such activities would only cause chaos and consume time”

(Lecturer 11)

Lecturer 5 indicated that the department of English only provide them with a grammar-teaching syllabus. The participant stated, *“Generally speaking, yes, I had a grammar teaching syllabus but no clear learning objectives and no expected outcome.”* Similarly, Lecturer 9 stated, *“No, most of the lecturers here teach grammar without considering any specified teaching programme.”* Similarly, Lecturer 6 indicated:

When I started to teach at the English Language Department, I was not introduced to the teaching syllabus in terms of teaching content, learning objectives nor expected outcomes.

It was all left to me. To be honest, this was quite hard for me especially because I was a novice lecturer.”

Moreover, regarding the question *“Is there a proforma for the grammar module/subject at the university?”* all of the lecturers stated without a doubt that they had never had a proforma when teaching undergraduates.

Regarding the question, *“Do you prepare exercises in the form of handouts or do you use exercise books?”* half of the lecturers stated that they used both handouts and course books whereas the others used a course book or they put together handouts from various sources and photocopied them for the students. When the lecturers were asked if teaching grammar was a personal choice or the department imposed it, surprisingly, only two of the lecturers stated that it was a personal choice whereas all the other participants claimed that the department imposed it.

Another issue, which came up in the interviews by some of the lecturers, was teacher training. Although there was not a direct question concerning training, a number of lecturers mentioned that even though they know the different approaches, they do not know how to apply them in class. Lecturer 2 stated:

“Teachers, especially in the context of EFL, could benefit from learning some alternative teaching approaches instead of the old methods for teaching grammar so that they can integrate grammar or structure into other language skills. Regular training sessions could be helpful in preparing lecturers to use different approaches.”

5.18 Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings

The following table illustrates the triangulation of findings from both the students and the lecturers. The triangulation of the data will give a richer, more precise view of the teaching of grammar at Tripoli University.

Table 81: Triangulation of data

| Objective | Learners' view | Lecturers' views |
|--|---|---|
| The role of grammar | <p>63% of the students consider grammar important.</p> <p>Only 30% enjoy learning grammar.</p> <p>60 % agree that grammar helps improve writing and speaking</p> | <p>92% of Lecturers consider grammar important.</p> <p>62% enjoy teaching grammar.</p> <p>85% think that grammar improves the learners' communicative competence</p> |
| Methods and techniques | <p>83% agree to the preference of learning grammar explicitly.</p> <p>89% of students agree that the way grammar is taught makes them less interested in learning it.</p> <p>78% agree to the integration of grammar at the same time 92% agreed that grammar should also be taught as a separate lesson.</p> <p>53% do not prefer the lecturers to use L1 in teaching grammar rules.</p> | <p>99% prefer teaching grammar deductively.</p> <p>100% considered grammar not difficult to teach</p> <p>69% consider grammar should be taught integrated with other skills and isolated with communicative activities</p> <p>100% use L1 in explaining grammar rules, while 77% use L1 but do not approve.</p> |
| Difficulties with grammar and students' outcome | <p>72% found it difficult to use grammar knowledge in writing</p> <p>78% found difficulty in using grammar knowledge when speaking.</p> | <p>54% think that their students had difficulty in using their grammar in writing.</p> <p>99% consider that their learners have trouble using grammar when they speak</p> |
| Error correction | <p>45% prefer no grammar correction when they speak.</p> <p>46 % prefer no grammar correction when they write</p> | <p>69% prefer not correcting grammar in speaking</p> <p>100% correct grammar mistakes in writing</p> |

The above table indicates that on the whole, the responses of both the lecturers and learners on all the issues concerning; *the role of grammar in teaching a foreign language*, *Methods and techniques used in teaching grammar* and *Difficulties with grammar and students' outcome*, are more or less in agreement. However, one point which was quite interesting to point out is that while 89% of students agree that the way grammar is taught makes them less interested in learning it, all the teachers thought that grammar was not difficult to teach. This goes to show that there is a gap between the way lecturers teach grammar and how the learners perceive what is being taught. Another point which is quite contradicting is concerning *Error correction*. While a fewer than half of the learners do not like being corrected when they speak, more than half of the lecturers prefer not to correct their learners' grammar when they speak.

5.19 Summary of qualitative data

The previous section focused on the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews. A description of the sample was given at the beginning of this section. In general, the lecturers' responses provided in the semi-structured interviews support the findings of the questionnaire although they do have some contradicting points in certain areas. The themes that emerged from the data are four: the role of grammar in foreign language teaching, methods and techniques of teaching grammar in class, the students' outcome of the teaching of grammar and the grammar syllabus. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above findings shows that the aim, which was addressed by the research question: "What are the perceptions of lecturers and learners

regarding the teaching of English grammar?" was answered from the responses of the lecturers and the learners from both the quantitative and qualitative data. Another issue that emerged from the results of the lecturers concerned the way students are assessed, facilities, staff development and training. Lecturers are concerned about the situation of the teaching of grammar and are very keen to develop and make improvements in the future. From the interviews, it seemed that the lecturers were quite knowledgeable of what they were doing in class; they seemed very sensitive towards the learners' feelings and best interest. However, from the teachers' views it is evident that because of the poor educational environment and the lack of facilities the lecturers are unable to develop their methods and techniques used in teaching. The following chapter will present the discussion and conclusions of this study.

Chapter Six

Discussion and Conclusion

6.0. Introduction

This study set out to shed light on how English grammar was taught and how teachers comprehended the role of grammar in foreign language teaching. It also aimed to measure the attitudes of the students towards grammar. In Chapter Five, the results of the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data were provided. In this chapter, the findings, which emerged from the analysis, are interpreted and discussed. The focus of the interpretation of the data is to relate the findings to the original research questions and to the existing literature and previous research studies discussed in chapter three.

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first discusses the results of the study according to the research objectives and section two summarises the conclusions of the research findings. The chapter will also present the limitations of the study, contribution to knowledge, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

6.1 Summary of the key literature debate

Within the literature, it is evident that the teaching of grammar has been and still is a controversial topic in second and foreign language teaching. A great deal of research has been conducted over a long period on how grammar is best acquired, how grammar should be taught or whether grammar should be

taught at all. Moreover, as evident in the literature attempts have also been made by a many scholars to describe and determine what grammar means. Some scholars emphasise the descriptive and prescriptive aspect of grammar while others consider that grammar is not just about rules of language but grammar is concerned with the way words are formed and structured in a sentence using these rules, in order to convey precise meanings in a communicative context. Myhill et al. (2013:103) maintain that, “*One challenge confronting any researcher of grammar is the multiplicity of meanings and connotations that the word evokes*”. Grammar provides useful insights and views, which are often overlapping, saying almost the same thing, even though they are stated differently. Larsen-Freeman (2003), states that grammar is not only a set of rules that teachers try to implant in students’ minds. The aim is to have students use grammatical structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. According to Larsen-Freeman (2003), the benefits of teaching grammar are numerous. She sees grammar as an essential component of language, a system that learners can use for their communicative needs and a tool, which allows them to say more than they already know.

The dispute around grammar has divided the views of researchers into three camps. The first are proponents of grammar who view that grammar holds an important part of teaching language. The second camp are the opponents of grammar who call for the discontinuation of grammar instruction on the basis that teaching grammar does more harm than it does good. The third camp call for a revival of grammar stating that grammar is too good to be abandoned. The third view looks into integrating grammar into a communicative context

where all the different skills are taught. Regardless of its controversial status from certain perspectives of second language acquisition (SLA) and English Language Teaching (ELT), it is now widely acknowledged that some formal, conscious attention to form promotes language learning, as suggested by Burgess and Etherington (2002), Borg, and Burns (2008).

The findings of the qualitative data confirm that the learners are aware of the concept of grammar and its role in teaching and learning a foreign language. The lectures gave different interpretations to the concept of grammar as being the “basis of language” “one of the main pillars of language” or “*the building blocks of a language it is the cement which keep the bricks of a wall together*” The lecturers also observed it as; “*the backbone or skeleton of language*”. All these metaphors display what the lecturers consider grammar to be in foreign language teaching and learning. Both the learners and lecturers had positive views about grammar and considered that it be integrated with the other skills.

6.2 Perceptions concerning the difficulties facing Libyan students when learning English grammar.

According to Ellis (2006), two different senses of learning difficulty can be distinguished. It can refer to (1) the difficulty learners have in understanding a grammatical feature and (2) it can refer to the difficulty they have in internalising a grammatical feature so that they are able to use it accurately in communication. Ellis (2006) states that these two senses relate to the discrepancy between learning grammar as explicit knowledge and as implicit

knowledge. Evidently, what is difficult to learn as explicit knowledge and as implicit knowledge is not the same. Ellis (2006) exemplifies stating that most learners have no difficulty in grasping the rule for English third person–s but they have enormous difficulty in internalising this structure so they can use it accurately. Similarly, the results from this study indicate that in general, a large number of learners do have difficulties with grammar. 72% of the learners agreed or strongly agreed that they found it difficult to use their grammatical knowledge when they write and speak in the English language. It could be speculated that this difficulty is due to the lack of oral practice of the given rule in the classroom. From the researchers own teaching experience, the learners are able to master the rules perfectly well when it comes to grammar exercises but even when they graduate they still feel intimidated to speak and make trivial grammatical errors when they write. The findings from the questionnaire also reveal that there is a correlation between the statements: *“I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write and grammar should be integrated”*, where $r = .816$, which is a strong positive correlation. This strong correlation goes to show that the students are well aware of the effect of teaching grammar and its connection to writing. The results also reveal another correlation between *“I find it hard to use my grammar knowledge when I write”* and *“teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes”* with $r = .186$, which also shows the effect of error correction on improving learners writing.

It is also evident from the findings that 60% of the students considered that it was difficult to become fluent speakers without knowing a lot of grammar. While 61%, found it challenging to become accurate speakers with limited

ability to use grammar. This infers the students' lack of confidence in the ability to speak accurately and fluently due to their inability to put their explicit grammatical knowledge into communicative use. The findings from the Anova test specify that although many students in all the different year groups agreed or strongly agreed that they had difficulties with grammar, fourth year students had the highest agreement rate. This is quite surprising owing to the fact that they have been learning English grammar for many years let alone three years at the University. It is also evident from the findings that the statement, which the students agreed upon most, was that they would rather not speak in English so that they do not make mistakes. The results of this study concerning students' difficulty with grammar are supported by the findings of a study conducted by Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011). His findings indicate that a gap between students' grammatical knowledge and communicative ability is quite evident. The teachers participating in his study realise that most of their students can recall grammatical rules accurately and perform very well on discrete-point grammar exercises, but seem to fail in achieving such grammatical accuracy in actual communication. When the students were asked if the difference between Arabic and English grammar caused difficulty in learning, more than half the students 61% agreed. Cook (2001) states that the first language helps learners when it has elements in common with the second language and hinders them when they differ. Since English and Arabic language systems belong to two different linguistic families, they differ widely which leads to negative interference (Al-Ahdal *et al.* 2015). It is evident from these findings, that at Tripoli University, the students' lack of ability to use their grammatical knowledge in communication may be due to the way they are

taught, which is the exclusive use of the deductive approach in teaching. In this type of learning environment, students learn the grammatical rules and structures are not given the opportunity to use these structures in a communicative context.

With regards to the qualitative data concerning the lecturers' perceptions of the students' difficulties, most of the lecturers confirmed that their learners had difficulties in using correct grammar when they speak even though they have learned that particular structure in class. However only one lecturer stated that almost all her students to some extent, could use their grammar knowledge in their speaking and writing skills. However, concerning the question about the learners' ability to use their grammar knowledge in writing, seven of the lecturers stated that unfortunately only some of the students were able to do so. They also mentioned that the students' ability to produce accurate grammatical structures was more evident in writing than in speaking. However, the other six claimed that most of their students were quite capable, to a certain extent, of using their grammar knowledge in writing. Although the lecturers had two varying responses they all agreed to the fact that to some extent, the students were, able to use their grammar knowledge in writing more than they could in speaking, which is quite natural given the fact that a person has more time to construct sentences when they write rather than when they speak. The findings of the students and lecturers' perceptions concerning the difficulties with grammar from both the quantitative and qualitative study seem to support each other in the fact that the learners have difficulties in using their grammar knowledge when they speak and write in English.

6.3 The perceptions of the learners and lecturers on the role of grammar in foreign language learning and teaching and learning

Cook (2001) considers grammar as the central area of language around which other areas such as pronunciation and vocabulary revolve. According to him, however important the other components of the language may be they are all connected to each other through grammar. Moreover, Ur (2009) explains that there are rules, which govern how words are manipulated and organised in order to express meanings. Ur (2009) views, that a competent speaker of the language will be able to apply these rules to convey his or her chosen meaning effectively and acceptably. In line with these views, the overall mean of the whole construct (which is 3.0463) concerning the role of grammar indicates that the students showed mixed reactions but broadly speaking, they viewed grammar to be a vital part of second language learning. The results specify that 63% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that grammar is an important part of learning English. The findings of the data analysis also indicate a positive correlation between grammar is an important part of learning English and two statements: "*grammar improves my writing*" $r = .744$ and "*grammar can enhance my speaking*" $r = .739$. Another positive correlation worth mentioning is that between "*the importance of grammar*" and "*teaching grammar separately*" with $r = .118$ and "*the importance of grammar*" and "*the integration of grammar with other skills*" with $r = .230$. These two correlations show that the students seem to encourage both isolated and integrated grammar instruction. Furthermore, with reference to the role of grammar in improving writing, a little above half 59% of the learners agreed or strongly

agreed with the given statement. Mulroy (2004:53) points out, "*Grammar describes the rules by which speech is organized and thus gains its meaning*". Mulroy (2004) also clarifies that student who are unable to understand grammar lack any method for analysing meaning when it is not intuitively obvious. Similarly, concerning the role of grammar in understanding the meaning of words, 59% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the specified statement concerning the role of grammar in working out the meanings of a word.

It is evident from the results of the Anova that Year One, two and three had similar responses towards the construct as a whole, which is concerned with the role of grammar in foreign language teaching, whereas year four students had different responses. The findings indicated that the highest agreement rate concerning the role of grammar in learning English was in year 4, with 77% concerning the role of grammar in writing and 76% in speaking and 76% in the role of grammar in understanding the meaning of words in a context. These findings indicate that the older students are more aware of how they perceive grammar moreover, they realise how it does affect and enhance their learning of English. This could be because they have had more exposure to the language and have realised how the lack of good grammar use effects their production and comprehension. Concerning the role of grammar in foreign language learning, the findings of this study suggest that comparable to previous studies (Schulz, 1996, 2001, Loewen et al, 2009) although more than half the students indicated that they did not enjoy learning grammar they still considered it an important part of learning a foreign language.

Regarding the teachers' views on the role of grammar instruction in foreign language teaching, the lecturers' views were based on their past learning experiences where English is taught as a foreign language and where more emphasis is put on explicit grammar teaching. The lecturers' perspectives seemed to resonate with many applied linguists' proclamations in the literature that explicit grammar teaching is beneficial to learners despite the current movement toward a communicative approach to English language teaching. Several studies have been conducted which survey teachers' beliefs concerning the teaching of grammar. Yet, there have not been many empirical investigations into the beliefs of learners and lecturers about the role of grammar and grammar teaching and learning conducted by Libyan researchers working in the higher education sector in Libyan Universities. Therefore, findings from this study will benefit grammar and grammar learning and teaching in the Libyan context and contexts similar to the Libyan Educational Background.

The lecturers described grammar as "basis of language" "one of the main pillars of language", the "*grammar is the building blocks of a language it is the cement which keep the bricks of a wall together,*" The lecturers also observed as the backbone or skeleton of language (Folse, 2009:57). This supports the results of Burgess and Etherington (2002), which show that most teachers viewed grammar as a framework for the rest of the language, they considered grammar and grammar teaching as a vital part learning. The lecturers also

believed that grammar was a very important part of the communicative competence. They considered that direct grammar teaching would assist the learners to communicate in English more confidently and with greater accuracy which is supported by the findings of (Borg, 2003; Richards et al. 2001). The majority of the lecturers also believed that grammar was important for the mastery of all of the four language skills, particularly writing skills where grammatical accuracy and the ability to use complex grammatical structures were required. This finding is confirmed in the study conducted by (Farrell and Lim, 2005; Borg and Burns, 2008). It can be concluded from the majority of the lecturers' responses that they certainly considered grammar and grammatical accuracy as an essential part of language and communication as found by (Burgess and Etherington, 2002). Although the British EAP teachers in Burgess and Etherington's (2002) study did not believe that grammar knowledge could lead to accurate communicative use of the language, they felt that such knowledge was important, and that the key reason for learners' errors was their lack of grammar knowledge of the language. Burgess and Etherington (2002) found that both teachers and students held positive opinions toward grammar teaching, which is in line with the results of both Schulz's studies and this present one. The results of this study indicate that both teachers and students at Tripoli University are generally in favour of teaching grammar. As presented in Chapter 5, the findings from this mixed method study support the findings of previous studies (Borg and Burns, 2008; Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers, 1997; Borg, 2003; Incecay and Dollar, 2011; Schulz, 1996, 2001, Polat, 2009) that Lecturers and students highly value grammar, and grammatical accuracy. They also showed positive views

about teaching grammar eclectically (deductively and inductively) as an effective approach to teaching a foreign language.

6.4 The perceptions of Learners and Lecturers on grammar teaching

Horwitz (1999) states that understanding learner beliefs about language learning is important in order to understand learner strategies and plan appropriate language instruction. This study investigated the views of the learners and teachers on the teaching and learning of English grammar. According to the student's responses, the overall mean (3.5326) of the construct concerning methods and techniques of grammar teaching and learning, shows that the respondents more or less agree with the items of the construct as a whole. Regarding the integration of grammar in teaching, over half of the students 78% agreed or strongly agreed while only 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The results of the Anova test yield that although all the year groups are in agreement with the construct, fourth year students display a higher agreement rate. From the outcome, it is clear that the older students are more aware of the methods and techniques, which enhances their learning and their accuracy and fluency. This finding is supported by the argument put forward by Nassaji and Fotos (2004) who state that if the goal of second language learning is the development of communicative competence, enabling learners to use language for communicative purposes, then grammar and communication must be integrated. The students views concerning the integration of grammar are also in line with Savignon (1991) who maintains that learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their

communicative needs and experiences. For this reason, grammar and communication are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent. On the other hand, the lecturers seemed to have split views concerning the integration of grammar. More than half lecturers agreed that grammar should be integrated, whereas four of them did not think highly of including grammar with all the different skills. Two lecturers refused any kind of integration of grammar in any lesson considering isolated grammar instruction more beneficial with some alteration in the methods used. While another of the four lecturers considered integrating grammar with speaking and writing but not reading, elaborating that any focus on grammar will interrupt the main aim of reading (which is comprehension). The findings of this study also correspond with the findings of Borg and Burns (2008) which revealed that the majority of the teachers in their study expressed strong views about the need to avoid teaching grammar in isolation from their point of view there should be at least some integration. While just a little over, half of the teachers who called for the integration of grammar stated that grammar should be fully integrated with the other skills. On the other hand, when the students were asked about teaching grammar in isolation, the responses were almost the same for all the year groups. The results revealed that 91% of the participants agreed that grammar should be taught in a separate lesson. Although there is some contradiction between the students agreement with integration and their agreement to teaching grammar in isolation, a study conducted by Barrot (2014) confirmed that combining both isolated and integrated grammar instruction can significantly improve the speaking and writing performances of students. Another study conducted by Spada *et al.* (2014) also confirms the complementarity of Isolated and

Integrated focus on form in which they both contribute positively to L2 learning. It is evident in the literature that numerous scholars support the view that a combination of isolated and integrated FFI can be more beneficial than applying one approach and neglecting another one (Fotos, 2005; Azar, 2007; Spada and Lightbown, 2009).

Concerning the issue of *deductive teaching*, while 70% of the learners did not enjoy learning grammar, and 89% agreed that the way grammar was taught made them less interested in learning it, 88% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they preferred being taught grammar by being given the rules followed by exercises for practice. It is speculated from these findings that the learners really do find deductive grammar instruction beneficial but the techniques and approaches of teaching it should be reconsidered by the lecturers. 93%, of fourth year learners, which represents the majority of the year group, were the most in favour of the deductive approach. This finding is consistent with Freeman (2015) that research on learner's preferences has shown that learners preferred a deductive approach where they are provided with the rules before they are given exercises. However, the finding revealed that the learners were also open to inductive- implicit instruction. It is evident from the results that a little over half 55% of the respondents agreed that they should be given the chance to extract the rules from the examples provided in a lesson. What is quite contradicting, is that although many of year four learners preferred deductive instruction, half 53% of them agreed or strongly agreed to being taught through an inductive approach. While the results contradict, the literature points to the fact that some rules can only be taught

deductively while other rules can be taught inductively. The findings here also seem to be consistent with Ellis (2005) who promotes that implicit and explicit knowledge can be both separable and cooperative. However, surprising the results concerning inductive and deductive instruction may be, these results could be due to the fact that year four learners have been learning English grammar deductively for as long as they have been learning English but they still lack the ability to use it in communication, therefore they may think that implicit learning along with explicit learning may be more beneficial. In addition, DeKeyser (1995), states that implicit and explicit learning are related. Explicit learning takes place with synchronised awareness of what is being learnt, whereas implicit learning occurs without synchronised awareness of what is being learnt.

The students had mixed views concerning the use of extensive repetitive exercises for teaching grammar. While 32% agreed or strongly agreed that they considered repetitive exercise effective in learning grammar, 65% disagreed which represents more than half of the participants. This outcome is rather surprising owing that a large number of fourth year and first year students agreed more than year two and year three learners, that extensive repetitive exercises are quite useful. The reason for this may be that the Libyan students have been exposed to explicit deductive instruction all their life, whether it was in English or Arabic. They are used to practicing what they have learned through rote exercises, which may be effective for many students considering their current levels of study. In this vein, Cook (2001) maintains

that many European graduates who have been taught English grammar using deductive explicit instruction have become fluent spontaneous speakers, which proves that rules learned consciously can be converted to non-conscious processes for some students. On the other hand, the lecturers had a rather fixed opinion. Out of the thirteen lecturers, eight stated that they taught in a rather traditional way using an explicit/ deductive approach while the other five stated that they did not stick to one method of teaching. Although the five lecturers did elaborate that, their choice of method depended on the class size and the student's levels of English, in the end they were forced to choose a traditional approach because of the given circumstances at Tripoli University (class size, learner's level of English). However, the literature is still quite vague on the effectiveness of implicit inductive or explicit deductive instruction although much research has been conducted.

Concerning the students' responses to the statement "*Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules*" Only, a minority of the students agreed with the statement although they are very keen on being able to speak the English language. This reaction may be because in Libya the English language is considered a foreign language therefore there is no contact with the language outside the class so the students know that they have no exposure to the language in order to learn and practice. For this reason, they may prefer grammatical instruction instead of communication and exposure. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Loewen et al. (2009) where second language learners chose communication over grammar instruction because they were able to

practice the language outside the class. However, Loewen et al. (2009) stated that the foreign language learners preferred grammar instruction over communication because they were unable to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom, and for this reason, the foreign language learners may have placed less value on communication in comparison to grammar instruction.

Another finding from the questionnaire, worth mentioning is concerning error correction. Overall, more than half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed on having their errors corrected, whereas the lecturers had mixed views. While all the lecturers admitted to correcting their learners' errors in written tasks, 69% of the lecturers preferred not correcting their learners' errors when they speak. Some of the lecturers said that they preferred to write the learner's error on the board and then explain why it is incorrect and provide them with the correct answer. This method of correcting oral errors may be quite effective as the learners are not interrupted and intimidated in front of their classmates.

All the lecturers in this study stated that they did not have a clear proforma or a syllabus design provided from the department. They also did not know what the outcomes of their teaching would be. The only way for them to know if the learners understood the rules was through the results of the learners' tests and exams. This could also be one of the factors, which really effects the quality of teaching grammar at Tripoli University. Another point worth mentioning is the lecturers' unfamiliarity with the different methods and approaches in teaching

English in general and in teaching grammar in particular. This may be due to the lack of training and self-development, which was mentioned, by a number of lecturers during the interviews. Many of the lecturers are only aware of the methods, which they learned years ago by lecturers who used dated material. Even if the lecturers had some knowledge of the methods and approaches updated through current research, they may be unable to apply these approaches because they may not know how and they may not have the appropriate resources to apply these approaches. This is also one of the factors, which really effects the quality of teaching grammar at Tripoli University

Concerning the lecturers' views about the difficulty of teaching grammar, unexpectedly, all the lecturers found that grammar was not at all difficult to teach. This could be due to the fact that the lecturers have been learning about grammar for many years. They are quite knowledgeable of the rules and grammatical terminology, because of the traditional way they have been taught, which is not very different from how they are teaching. In addition, the focus of their teaching is on the grammatical rules not the use of these rules, which may make the teaching process quite simple.

Another unanticipated finding is that while all the lecturers found grammar not difficult to teach and 62% enjoyed teaching it, only two of the thirteen lecturers said that teaching grammar was a personal choice whereas all the others said that the department imposed it on them. Although these findings are quite

important in addressing the issue of teaching grammar effectively, up to the knowledge of the researcher, no studies in the literature have really looked into these particular points. This is quite surprising because there may be a difference between lecturers' views concerning the difficulty of teaching grammar, especially between native teachers, second language teachers and foreign language teachers.

6.5 Conclusion

The primary focus of this exploratory study is to assess the perceptions and attitudes of both the lecturers and learners at Tripoli University Faculty of Languages English Department, concerning the teaching of grammar. The Data used in this study was collected through a mixed-method approach using questionnaires and semi structured interview to assess the perceptions and views of students and lecturers regarding the role of grammar, methods and techniques of teaching grammar, difficulties of teaching grammar, and error correction. In general, the findings provide evidence of a strong belief on the parts of both students and Lecturers that formal grammar study plays a positive role in foreign language learning. Students did feel that formal grammar instruction was important in learning English, by means of it being a tool to enhance speaking, listening, reading and writing accurately. However, the learners expressed their dissatisfaction by how grammar was taught and showed interest in more communicative enhanced techniques.

Teachers viewed the importance of considering grammar instruction as a valuable part of an integrated approach to language teaching. Most of them insisted on the fact that grammar was an essential component of any language without which “accuracy would be compromised.” The teachers were unanimous in their belief that the teaching of grammar helped improve students’ communicative competence in English. The qualitative data in this study also revealed that teachers’ practices and beliefs of formal grammar instruction were unquestionably influenced by their experiences as language learners and practicing teachers

Based on the results of this study it has been established that grammar plays an important role in the Libyan context. The findings of the study correspond with other studies undertaken worldwide (e.g. Andrews, 2003; Borg and Burns, 2008; Burgess and Etherington, 2002; Farrell and Lim, 2005; Schulz, 1996, 2001,) that the teachers held a positive belief about the importance of explicit grammar instruction in the development of learners’ communicative competence. The reasons underlying these beliefs were consistent across all individuals. They believed that explicit grammar instruction enabled learners to communicate in English with greater accuracy and confidence. Therefore, they rejected the idea that teaching grammar should be delayed until the later stage of learners’ interlanguage development. The lecturers also held strong beliefs about the explicit knowledge of grammar. They felt that explicit knowledge was useful for their students to achieve grammatical accuracy, and the lack of explicit grammatical knowledge was viewed as a reason for their students’ non-participation in class. They also believe that grammar is closely connected to reading writing and speaking skills. Overall, teachers in this

current study believe that grammar instruction is crucial in a foreign language programme, and therefore they strongly preferred the integration of grammar.

The findings also revealed that the learners do have difficulties in using their grammatical knowledge when they speak and write in the English language. In addition, they have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the way grammar is taught. The findings also clearly showed that the students and lecturers have strong views concerning the use of explicit deductive grammar instruction however; they also feel the need to integrate grammar into communicative contexts. This finding is consistent as there is much proof in the literature, which indicates and confirms that implementing a deductive approach in a communicative context is very beneficial especially when it is treated as a foreign language. Azar (2007a) indicates that in Grammar based teaching approach communicative activities are implemented into a structural syllabus often known as a grammar class

The data gained through the analysis of the interviews showed that teachers' beliefs are greatly influenced by prior experiences as language learners and teachers. Teachers' beliefs play a critical role in improving second language instruction. Uncovering these beliefs can contribute to an understanding of how to enhance and improve teaching and learning.

6.6 Recommendations of the study

Based on the results of the study and the literature, which highlights the important role of grammar in foreign language teaching and learning. It was found that the following recommendations would contribute to the improvement of grammar instruction at Tripoli University.

1. The learners need to be taught grammar through various methods and approaches to satisfy their individual styles of learning, and lecturers need to consider students' attitudes and perceptions when making decisions about how to teach grammar.
2. In-service training programmes should be planned in a way that allows lecturers to articulate the potential and actual difficulties and discuss techniques of overcoming them.
3. Lecturers should encourage students to focus on language use rather than language knowledge and shift the role of learning English from a system of rules and vocabulary into a system of function and use. The lecturers should also encourage the learners to participate confidently in oral activities.
4. Lecturers should have access to formal and informal forums of professional development in order to support their efforts to improve their teaching skills. The Ministry of Higher Education should administer teacher training sessions and workshops for lectures periodically, in which different teaching methods and approaches are practiced.
5. The curriculum and material developers should show an understanding of learners' and lecturers' difficulties, and provide adequate direction on

how the potential difficulties could be addressed when preparing their classroom activities.

6. The Ministry of Higher Education should work hand in hand with the department of English in order to construct a university-graded syllabus design that contains clear learning outcomes, methods of presenting the content of the syllabus and criteria of assessing students' writing and speaking, which are essential at the university level. These features will influence the consistency of students' level and progress in communicating accurately and fluently.
7. Lecturers teaching English in General and grammar specifically must make use of technology and update their teaching aids to make learning effective, interesting and enjoyable for the learners. They should also encourage and motivate their students into speaking and participating in the lecture.
8. Lecturers should make use of authentic material, problem solving, different tasks and role-play during a grammar lecture; this would enhance the use of the taught structure. It will also make the lesson more enjoyable for the learners.
9. Grammar lecturers should plan regular informal meetings with each other in order to share and exchange new views and techniques concerning the teaching syllabus they are given.
10. Lecturers should collaborate and do experimental research inside the English department by applying new methods and techniques in teaching. The findings of their studies should be passed on to the

ministry of higher Education where it can be used for constructing new syllabus designs.

11. Lecturers should mix appropriate methods and techniques that suit Libyan student' needs and abilities for teaching English effectively in the class. These methods should involve necessary materials for teaching, such as technology, English labs, visual aids, audio aids.

12. Although this point has not been covered in the literature or interviews but because of its relevance, I recommend annual peer observation in order for lecturers to receive informal feedback on their teaching skills and strategies. Feedback from the students through a questionnaire at the end of the semester, will also give the lecturer an idea of whether the learners benefited from the lessons or not.

6.7 Limitations of the study

As is the case with all research studies, there are a number of limitations, which must be acknowledged. This research was limited to investigating the views of the lecturers and learners concerning the teaching of grammar, at one of eight universities belonging to the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya. It did not look into the curriculum used for teaching grammar. Therefore, further studies need to be conducted to widen the scope of this research in relation to the number of universities and targeted populations and locations. Such development would allow researchers to achieve a broader range of results and draw a more complete picture about the role of grammar in foreign language teaching.

Moreover, a limitation worth mentioning is that observation, as an additional tool for gathering qualitative data was not an option. The use of observation would have provided richer data along with the interviews and questionnaires. However, this is due to the circumstances of the Libyan situation being, the ongoing conflict and the cultural mores of Libyan lecturers who are not used to being observed. Therefore, interviews were the only means of collecting qualitative data. This study and its results are limited to the public sector only, as the numbers of students exceed those of the private sector.

6.8 Contribution to knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge in several ways. It has added to the literature of exploring teacher and learner beliefs about grammar. The findings obtained from the setting of this study will also certainly contribute to the important role grammar plays in foreign language teaching. By providing practical evidence, this study has highlighted the quality of grammar instruction in a context where the only way of instruction known to learners and lecturers is the deductive approach and where English has been banned for many years.

Another point evident in the literature is that the topic of English grammar has been under-researched in countries where the official language is Arabic. Even the limited studies, which have looked into the teaching of grammar, focused on primary and secondary school students who learn English as a subject taught twice or three times a week. The literature barely shows any studies in

the Arab world, which look at the teaching of grammar from the perspectives of English as a foreign language for lecturers and undergraduate learners. The findings of this study could have an impact on countries with similar settings, in the Arab world.

This study has also made a methodological contribution. It is apparent from the literature that not many studies on beliefs about grammar have employed the use of mixed methods using both questionnaires and interviews. The use of mixed methods has given a deeper understanding of the status of grammar at Tripoli University where the findings collected from the students through the questionnaire have been supported by the findings of the interviews. It is anticipated that the literature and findings of this study will make a practical contribution to Lecturers, programme leaders, the Ministry of Higher Education and researchers in planning, designing, and assessing a relevant syllabus and material, which will make a big difference in the outcome of the teaching and learning of grammar and English in general.

A conceptual model has been constructed in order to summarise what this study has contributed to the Libyan context. It brings together the results of this study which are represented by recommendations for the university, the department, the lecturers and learners, in addition to links to the broad debate of the literature about the teaching and learning of grammar. This model may be generalizable to different settings within Libya, where the teaching environment and the learning circumstances are similar.

Figure: 10 A conceptual Model



Source: compiled by the researcher

6.9 Suggestions for further research

The process of doing this research has raised many questions and areas, which should be explored, particularly in the Libyan context. Among these are:

- To what extent are learners familiar with grammatical terminology and how does it affect their grammar use.
- Lecturers and teachers Perceptions towards implementing a Task based approach in Libyan Schools and Universities
- A study into the learning of English grammar. Instead of a focus on the teaching of grammar
- This study could be conducted on other universities in Libya and in the Arab world and the results can be compared to that of Tripoli University.
- Teachers stated beliefs and actual practices in teaching grammar at Tripoli University
- An experimental study on the implementation of the communicative approach in grammar instruction with reference to the private sector in Libya.

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Appendix 1



Name: Fadwa Rahuma

Title of Research: A Study of the Teaching and Learning of English Grammar with Reference to Libyan Students (A Case study of Tripoli University).

This questionnaire aims to gauge your opinion about the importance of teaching and learning English grammar. Please read the questions carefully and choose the answer that suits you best.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

GENDER: Male / Female

Age group: 18 – 20 21 – 23 24 –26 27 -30 30 - 34

Current University year: - 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

SECTION ONE

| No. | The importance of grammar | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Grammar is an important part of learning English. | | | | | |
| 2 | Learning grammar can help improve my writing. | | | | | |
| 3 | Learning grammar can enhance my speaking skills. | | | | | |
| 4 | Knowing grammar helps me understand the meaning of words when I read | | | | | |
| 5 | Grammar should not be an important part of language teaching. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6 | I enjoy learning grammar | | | | | |
| 7 | Learning English is mostly about learning grammar rules | | | | | |

SECTION TWO

| No. | Difficulties with grammar | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 8 | I would rather not speak in English than make mistakes | | | | | |
| 9 | L2 grammar is difficult to learn because it is different from my L1 grammar. | | | | | |
| 10 | I find it difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I write in the English language | | | | | |
| 11 | It is hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language | | | | | |
| 12 | It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it | | | | | |
| 13 | It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after learning the grammatical rules. | | | | | |

SECTION THREE

| No. | Teaching and learning grammar | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 14 | Teachers should integrate grammar into all the different classes where all the different communicative skills are taught (speaking, listening, reading and writing) | | | | | |
| 15 | Grammar should be taught gradually from primary to university levels) | | | | | |
| 16 | Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar. | | | | | |
| 17 | The way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it | | | | | |
| 18 | students should be encouraged to participate in different grammar activities during the lesson | | | | | |
| 19 | It is more important to focus on vocabulary and meaning rather than grammar | | | | | |
| 20 | The grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar, instead he/she should give examples and we try to understand the rules | | | | | |
| 21 | The grammar teacher should provide us with the grammatical rules and ask us to apply them to the given exercises | | | | | |
| 22 | In a grammar lesson I prefer that the rules are explained in English, without translating into Arabic | | | | | |
| 23 | I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups during a grammar lesson | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 24 | I prefer to learn grammar through reading, listening and speaking activities | | | | | |
| 25 | Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson where the main focus is learning structures of words and sentences | | | | | |
| 26 | English grammar should be explained in Arabic, and exercises should be done in English | | | | | |
| 27 | Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules | | | | | |
| 28 | My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language | | | | | |

SECTION FOUR

| No. | Error correction | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 29 | I dislike it when I am corrected in class | | | | | |
| 30 | Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (writing, reading or speaking) | | | | | |
| 31 | When I speak in class I prefer that the teacher always corrects my grammar in all the different English lessons | | | | | |

Appendix 2



Name: Fadwa Rahuma,

Title of Research: A Study into the Teaching and Learning of English Grammar

Age:

Gender:

Nationality:

Highest qualification (MA, PhD):

Years of teaching experience:

Interview Questions

Theme one: Place of grammar in the English Curriculum:

1. How long have you been teaching English grammar?
2. Do you enjoy teaching grammar?
3. Do you believe that grammar helps improve the student's communicative competence?
4. Do you believe that teaching grammar is compulsory in learning a foreign language?

Theme Two: Methods of Teaching English Grammar:

1. How do you teach grammar in your class? How do you begin the lesson?
2. What influences your grammar teaching (i.e. language teaching theories, Personal experiences)?
3. Do you explain the grammar rules in English only, or do you use Arabic also?
4. Which do you think is more beneficial and why?
5. During the grammar lesson, have you tried giving your students examples and asking them to extract the rules?
6. Do you think grammar should be taught in all the different language modules? (Such as writing, speaking and reading comprehension)? why or why not?
7. How were you taught grammar when you were a student? Do you think the way you were taught was effective?
8. Do you think that the way you were taught grammar has an influence on how you teach it today?
9. Are you aware of the methods and approaches of teaching grammar? (Please specify)
10. Do you correct students' grammatical errors when they speak in class? Why and if so when?
11. Do you correct students' grammatical errors in their written work?
12. Do you think that correcting your students' errors is effective or ineffective? Why?

Theme three: Problems of learning and teaching English Grammar

1. Do you believe that your students' speaking and writing skills are likely to improve through teaching grammar rules?
2. Are your students able to use their grammatical knowledge in speaking?
3. Are they able to use their grammar knowledge in writing?
4. Do you consider grammar difficult to teach?

Theme four: the grammar teaching syllabus

1. Do you have a clear grammar teaching programme with learning objectives and expected outcomes?
2. Is there a proforma for the grammar module/subject at the university?
3. Do you prepare exercises in the form of a hand- out or do you use exercise books?
4. Is teaching grammar a personal choice or was it Imposed by the department?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 3

Rotated Component Matrix^a

| | Component | | | | |
|-----|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B2 | .921 | | | | |
| A2 | .893 | | | | |
| B6 | .890 | | | | |
| A4 | .884 | | | | |
| A3 | .875 | | | | |
| A5 | .855 | | | | |
| C14 | .754 | | | | |
| C13 | | .901 | | | |
| C15 | | .849 | | | |
| C12 | | .828 | | | |
| C8 | | .804 | | | |
| A6 | | .781 | | | |
| A7 | | .754 | | | |
| C3 | | .592 | | | |
| C4 | | | .967 | | |
| C10 | | | .952 | | |
| C5 | | | .947 | | |
| C7 | | | .772 | | |
| C1 | | | .718 | | |
| B1 | | | | .936 | |
| B4 | | | | .922 | |
| B3 | | | | .874 | |
| B5 | | | | .698 | |
| D1 | | | | | .930 |
| D2 | | | | | .891 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Appendix 4

Factor One: Grammar and communicative skills

B2- L2 grammar is difficult to learn because it is different from my L1 grammar.

A2- Learning grammar can help improve my writing.

B6- It is challenging to become a confident speaker of English without doing communicative activities after learning the grammatical rules.

A4- Knowing grammar helps me understand the meaning of words when I read.

A3- Learning grammar can enhance my speaking skills.

A5- Grammar should not be an important part of language teaching.

C14- Grammar can be learned through exposure to language without the need for learning rules.

Factor 2: Explicit grammar instruction

C13- English grammar should be explained in Arabic, and exercises should be done in English.

C15- My English will improve more quickly if I study the grammar of the language.

C12- Grammar should be taught as a separate lesson where the focus is learning structures of words and sentences.

C8- The grammar teacher should provide us with the grammatical rules and ask us to apply them to the given exercises.

A6- I enjoy learning grammar.

A7- Learning English is mostly about learning grammar rules.

C-3 Intensive repetitive exercises are effective ways of learning English grammar.

Factor 3: Implicit Grammar Instruction

C4- The way English grammar is taught makes me less interested in learning it.

C10- I prefer doing oral exercises in small groups during a grammar lesson.

C5- Students should be encouraged to participate in different grammar activities during the lesson.

C7- The grammar teacher should not provide us with the rules of grammar, instead he/she should give examples and we try to understand the rules.

C1- Teachers should integrate grammar into all the different classes where all the different communicative skills are taught (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

Factor 4: Difficulties with Grammar

B1- I would rather not speak in English than make mistakes.

B4- It is hard to use my grammar knowledge when I speak in the English language.

B3- I find it difficult to use my grammar knowledge when I write in the English language.

B5- It is difficult to understand the meaning of a text without identifying its grammar before or while reading it.

Factor 5: Error Correction

D1- I dislike it when I am corrected in class.

D2- Teachers should always correct grammatical mistakes no matter what the lesson is (writing, reading or speaking).